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PROPHECY IN THE NOVELS

OF JOHN STEINBECK

by



O.S. MITCHELL

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Prophecy in the Novels of John Steinbeck, submitted by O.S. Mitchell in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand"--this is what the prophetic work of art does and what the prophetic work of art attempts to communicate. I propose to illustrate that John Steinbeck is a prophetic novelist.

In Part One I examine the major tool of the prophet, the rhythm or prophetic image. The prophetic images in In Dubious Battle (Chapter I) and in The Grapes of Wrath (Chapter II) proliferate in all directions so that each image becomes the whole novel--each image is a microcosmic statement of the novel and the novel in turn is a microcosmic reflection of the whole of reality.

In Part Two I discuss Steinbeck's prophetic message as explicitly and implicitly stated in his works. Steinbeck's prophetic or non-teleological philosophy is summarized and then applied to his novels. It is found that his most successful communication of the non-teleological universe is the prophetic image itself and the open-ended structure it creates--the image and structure are implicitly what Steinbeck attempts to preach explicitly.

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"The figure is the same for love. Like a piece of
ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own
melting."

Robert Frost, "The Figure a Poem Makes", 4.

INTRODUCTION

PROPHECY

The term prophecy is taken from E.M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel and is used in this thesis to designate what is both a technique and a philosophical 'system.' The key to both technique and 'system' is unity through relation--the part proliferates into the whole, the particular expands into the infinite.

In the chapter "Prophecy" in Aspects of the Novel Forster discusses prophetic fiction. He says that prophetic fiction has a number of definite characteristics, some of which are: "It is spasmodically realistic"¹; the realistic particulars reach back or extend beyond themselves (for example, "Melville--after the initial roughness of his realism--reaches straight back into the universal, to a blackness and sadness so transcending our own that they are indistinguishable from glory")²; it faces towards unity and yet it cannot be "tight"³; it sees "beyond cause and effect"⁴; "It is the implication that signifies"⁵ for the prophet does not "talk"⁶ or "hammer away"⁷--"what is implied is more important . . . than what is said"⁸ for the prophet's prophecy "lies outside words"⁹; "it gives us the sensation of a song or of sound."¹⁰

In the chapter "Pattern and Rhythm" Forster examines the prophet's main tools, the "rhythm" (which I call the prophetic image) and the expanding or open-ended structure. These two techniques are interrelated for the open-ended structure is created by the prophetic images. The rhythm may be developed by means of a word, a phrase, a sentence, an incident, a character, or an image--it is defined by Forster as "repetition plus variation."¹¹ Forster says that the rhythm

is like a musical phrase which reappears in varied forms and contexts, which continually develops but never hardens into a definite pattern and "by its lovely waxing and waning . . . fill[s] us with surprise and freshness and hope."¹² The novel that is structured around the rhythm has no external shape--the prophetic images "stitch" the novel together internally¹³ but leave its external form open and free.

E.M. Forster's concept of prophecy is a useful viewpoint from which to examine the novels of John Steinbeck. Steinbeck employs the prophetic image and the open-ended structure to communicate what cannot be said.

PART ONE

THE PROPHETIC IMAGE

"the sea is in the fish and the fish is in the sea"

E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 123.

"each species is at once the point and the base of a pyramid"

John Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 216.

CHAPTER I

PROPHETIC IMAGES IN IN DUBIOUS BATTLE

In The Log From the Sea of Cortez Steinbeck discusses tidal effects on the collective unconscious, on radio reception and on the speed of light. He concludes by saying that "one could safely predict that all physiological processes correspondingly might be shown to be influenced by the tides, could we but read the indices with sufficient delicacy."¹ If the prophetic image is read with sufficient delicacy it can be shown to point to or signify an area larger than itself. Steinbeck employs the prophetic image in much of his work, even in a non-fictional piece such as Once There Was a War. In this book, a collection of notes from Steinbeck's experience as a war correspondent during the Second World War, he tells of a sergeant's strange experience during the war in London. The sergeant describes how he walked by a cottage one night:

"About halfway back there was a light out onto the road. There was a little cottage, kind of, with the hedge coming up to it on both sides. There is a garden in front, a fence and then this big square window with little panes. Well, the light is coming out of that window. I looked right through and could see the room. It was kind of pleasant. There was a lamp on the table, and a fire in a small fireplace. It was kind of pleasant. It wasn't a very bright light, but you could see pretty well. There's a white cat asleep on the seat of a chair, and sitting beside the table under the lamp is a woman about fifty, I should say, and she is sewing on something. I stood there. Peeping-Tommed for a couple of minutes. It was peaceful and cozy-looking and nice."²

The sergeant tells how he walked away and felt disturbed about something. He thought maybe he should knock on the door and tell the owners to

put up their blackout curtains, but he decided that it looked so peaceful in the cottage that he would leave them. But he says that he felt there was something wrong and when he reaches camp he realizes what it is:

The sergeant picked up a little twig, dug at a grass root with it. "I walked along, but there was something that kept ticking in my head, something I couldn't get hold of. It began to sprinkle a little bit of rain, but not enough to hurt anything. I thought about the work I had to do, but I couldn't get away from the feeling that there was something wrong with something."

He dug out his grass root, and it came up with a little lump of soil in it. He shook the dirt out of it. "I was just about to turn into the camp when it plumped into my mind. Now, this is what it is. And I've been thinking about it, and I can't figure it out. There isn't any cottage there, just four stone walls all black with fire. Early in the blitz some Jerry dropped a fire bomb on that cottage."

His fingers were restless. They were trying to plant the grass roots again in the hole they had come out of. "You see what worries me about the whole thing is this," he said. "I just don't believe stuff like that."³

In these passages the description of the sergeant fiddling with a stick, digging at a grass root, pulling the root out with a lump of earth on it, shaking it out and then trying to replant the root in the hole becomes a prophetic image. The grass root image implies an explanation for the Sergeant's story--it is not merely a realistic detail. Steinbeck parallels what happens to the grass root to what may have been the sergeant's subconscious impulses during his experience. The sergeant unconsciously re-constructs the comfortable cottage with the old woman, the cat and the fire--he imaginatively re-plants the cottage in the hole from which it was blasted. This is also suggested by his trying to re-plant the grass root. Not only does the realistic detail of the grass root expand beyond itself, but the incident, of which the grass root image is a part, also expands in significance when its indices are read carefully. The two paradoxical drives in man, to

create and to destroy, are implied in this sketch. In war man destroys what man has created. In the microcosmic parallel, the sergeant destroys the grass root but then tries to replant it (just as he tried to replant the cottage which was destroyed by man). The image of the grass root and the larger image of the whole sketch are prophetic because they point to areas beyond themselves. Through them the finite is rendered infinite; the world is seen in a grain of sand.

There are a number of prophetic images in In Dubious Battle and The Grapes of Wrath which, when examined in relation to each other and in the context of the complete situations presented in each of the novels, are microcosms of the whole novel. The novels are in turn microcosmic images of man's existence. The method employed to examine the prophetic images in these two novels attempts to duplicate the method used by Steinbeck. Because of the intricate interweaving of image, image pattern, incident, character and theme it is impossible to discuss one of these entities isolated from the rest. In The Log From the Sea of Cortez Steinbeck says that there is no such thing as a "closed system,"

Everything impinges on everything else, often into radically different systems, although in such cases faintly. We doubt very much if there are any truly "closed systems."⁴

This statement is certainly true of Steinbeck's novels. The method used to explore the novels, therefore, is to begin with a particular image and allow the image to lead where it will--to other images and image patterns, to character, to incident or to theme. The method itself is probably a more graphic illustration of the prophetic technique than the detailed explanation for it shows by its movement the organic connections between the elements which make up the novel, the intense relation between each part and the whole which makes the

part become the whole.

Before examining the prophetic images in In Dubious Battle it should be pointed out that Mac and Jim are not stereotyped communist villains and that Steinbeck is not condemning them. In exploring the image patterns in relation to their characters it is difficult not to oversimplify. Mac and Jim are very complex "round"⁵ characters continually wavering between their natural impulses as live humans and their constant attempt to be cold, detached machines. Peter Lisca writes that Steinbeck

said he had tried to write In Dubious Battle "without looking through the narrow glass of political or economic preconception" and that he was not concerned with his protagonists as communists or capitalists but rather as humans "subject to the weaknesses of humans and to the greatnesses of humans."⁶

Steinbeck's attitude toward Mac and Jim is non-teleological--he actively accepts them as they are, he is detached and sympathetic at the same time. His ultimate comments on the "dubious battle" and on Mac and Jim are those of Yeats in "Easter 1916," "O when may it suffice?" and,

We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?⁷

The images of fallen leaves in In Dubious Battle are micro-cosmic images of the macrocosmic image, the novel. Fallen leaves are described only half a dozen times in the novel and from a superficial reading may appear to have no conceptual significance. Fallen leaves are first described early in the book as Mac and Jim walk through a park: "The maples were beginning to drop leaves on the path."⁸ Jim has just joined the communist party and is explaining to Mac that his past family life is the main reason for his joining. As he tells of

his experience he plays with a leaf:

He picked up a maple leaf from the ground and began carefully stripping the covering from the hand-like skeleton. "Look," he said. "All the time at home we were fighting, fighting something--hunger mostly. My old man was fighting the bosses. I was fighting the school. But always we lost. And after a long time I guess it got to be a part of our mind-stuff that we always would lose. My old man was fighting just like a cat in a corner with a pack of dogs around. Sooner or later a dog was sure to kill him; but he fought anyway. Can you see the hopelessness in that? I grew up in that hopelessness."

"Sure, I can see," Mac said. "There's millions of people with just that."

Jim waved the stripped leaf in front of him, and spun it between his thumb and forefinger. "There was more than that to it," he said. "The house where we lived was always filled with anger. Anger hung in that house like smoke; that beaten, vicious anger against the boss, against the superintendent, against the groceryman when he cut off the credit. It was an anger that made you sick to your stomach, but you couldn't help it."

"Go on," said Mac. "I don't see where you're getting, but maybe you do."

Jim jumped up and stood in front of the bench and whipped the leaf skeleton across his palm.⁹

Jim goes on to say that five communists he had met in jail were not victims of the hopeless anger and hate which had torn his family apart. Their hate was different, for it was directed against the whole system, not a boss or a butcher. There was no hopelessness in them, for they were convinced that they "would win their way out of the system they hated."¹⁰ Jim saw a "kind of peacefulness"¹¹ in these men and this is what he wants.

The description of the leaf in this park scene helps to make the situation sensually immediate to the reader and to 'float' Steinbeck's illusion. However, the description of the leaf is not merely realistic padding, for it carries a number of conceptual implications. The image of fallen leaves, apart from the context of any work of art, implies fall, dormancy and death. But the three images of Jim's playing with the leaf suggest more than the general

implications of sleep and death when examined in the contexts of Jim's description of his family's suffering and of his own experiences in the strike. The leaf images create a miniature reflection of these larger events.

As Jim plays with the leaf he describes the atmosphere in which his family lived. Earlier in the book, in his conversations with Nilson, Jim describes the effect this atmosphere had on his father, mother and sister. The family, which is a very important unit for Steinbeck (one of the main themes in The Grapes of Wrath is the unity and disintegration of the family), is slowly torn apart, stripped like the leaf Jim plays with in the park. Jim feels that it was the system which ruined his family, first spiritually and then physically killing each of its members. Jim's father was a spiritually broken man so full of hate and hopelessness that "he had to fight everything with his fists."¹² After his daughter suddenly disappeared (she had just reached puberty and the implication is that if she was not raped and killed she was caught like her mother and father in a soul-killing 'rat-race'), Jim's father "acted just as though he'd been hit between the eyes--slugged."¹³ He became involved in labor disputes and "was slugged so much . . . that he went punch-drunk."¹⁴ Finally he was killed while trying to dynamite a slaughter-house where he used to work.

Jim's mother was also reduced to a mechanical corpse. After her daughter disappeared her eyes "looked just like white stones."¹⁵ Jim remembers her as

"quieter even than before. She moved kind of like a machine, and she hardly ever said anything. Her eyes got a kind of dead look, too."¹⁶

Another sign of her spiritual death is her complete indifference to her Catholic upbringing even on her deathbed. At one time she liked to go to the Catholic church even though her husband hated churches:

"You know, Mac, my mother was a Catholic. She didn't go to church Sunday because my old man hated churches as bad as we do. But in the middle of the week, sometimes, she'd go into church when my old man was working. When I was a little kid she took me in sometimes, too . . . Well, there was a Mary in there. . . One time I asked my mother why she smiled like that. My mother said, 'She can smile because she's in Heaven.' I think she was jealous, a little."¹⁷

Here, at least, she had the desire or hope of attaining some kind of religious salvation. When she dies, however, her spiritual self has already been picked to a skeleton (in fact, this was probably the cause of her physical death) and it makes no difference to her whether she goes to heaven or hell:

"Word came in she was dying. . . There wasn't anything the matter with her. She wouldn't talk at all. She was a Catholic, only my old man wouldn't let her go to church. He hated churches. She just stared at me. I asked her if she wanted a priest, but she didn't answer me, just stared. 'Bout four o'clock in the morning she died. Didn't seem like dying at all. I didn't go to the funeral. . . I didn't want to. I guess she didn't want to live. I guess she didn't care if she went to hell, either."¹⁸

Jim's mother seemed indifferent to her physical death (it "Didn't seem like dying at all") because she had been spiritually "nibbled to death."¹⁹ That part of her which made physical life worth living had died long ago. Jim's father, mother, and sister fell and were stripped, like the leaf, until they became corpses, spiritual skeletons. The three leaf images interspersed in Jim's description of his family's experience create a miniature parallel of each member of the family and of the family as a group.

The leaf images are also a reflection of Jim's life. He is

identified with the "hand-like skeleton" of the leaf in the last image of the leaf in the park scene: "Jim jumped up and stood in front of the bench and whipped the leaf skeleton across his palm."²⁰ When he decides to join the party he is already half dead. In his interview Nilson says to him, "you act half asleep"²¹ and "you look half drunk, Jim. What's the matter with you?"²² Jim answers, "I don't know. I feel dead."²³ Nilson asks Jim why he wants to join the party and Jim replies, "I want to work toward something. I feel dead, I thought I might get alive again."²⁴ Jim, then, has already been partially "stripped" into a skeleton. He is, however, aware of his deadness and is attempting to come to life again by joining the party.

His fear of being caught in a living death appears again as he tells Mac why he has always been afraid of girls:

"You wouldn't believe it, Mac, but ever since I started to grow up I been scared of girls. I guess I was scared I'd get caught. . . . You see all the guys I used to run around with went through the mill. They used to try to make girls behind billboards and down in the lumber yard. Well, sooner or later some girl'd get knocked higher than a kite, and then--well, hell, Mac I was scared I'd get caught like my mother and my old man--two-room flat and a wood stove. Christ knows I don't want luxery, but I don't want to get batted around the way all the kids I knew got it. Lunch pail in the morning with a piece of soggy pie and a thermos bottle of stale coffee. . . . I just don't want to get nibbled to death."²⁵

By joining the party Jim hopes that he can escape the fate of the rest of his family. However, in spite of his efforts to come alive, Jim succumbs to a kind of life-in-death similar to that of his mother. His mother's spiritual and physical deaths were a result of her being used by the capitalist system. Jim's death, ironically, is brought about by his fervent desire to be "used" by the party--he joins the party to escape being used and exploited by capitalism (that is,

stripped by the system) and yet he is continually asking Mac to use him. Mac tells Jim, "I'll use you right down to the bone."²⁶ This statement is literally true for in the last scene of the novel Mac is using Jim's faceless corpse to further the cause, to prolong the strike. Jim, in his desire to be used by the party to bring about the ideal communist state, forgets to live or is not able to live. He becomes a dead skeleton leaf instead of a green growing leaf. Just before he is shot Jim tells Mac that he feels he has been missing something:

"I never had time to look at things, Mac, never. I never looked how leaves come out. I never looked at the way things happen. This morning there was a whole line of ants on the floor of the tent. I couldn't watch them. I was thinking about something else. Some time I'd like to sit all day and look at bugs, and never think of anything else. . . . I never look at anything. I never take time to see anything. It's getting to be over, and I won't know--even how an apple grows."²⁷

Process, things happening, is life and Jim is unable to participate in it because of his extreme commitment to the ideal, to the static, and therefore anti-life, ideal of the communist state. He has been stripped and transformed into the dead static leaf skeleton. His efforts and desires are all focused on an abstract end, which, he feels, demands violence, death, detachment, coldness, and inhumanity.

Jim's loss of his sense of life and humanity through his complete commitment to the Communist party and its abstract ideals results in his becoming as mechanical, indifferent and cold as his mother had been. When Mac is about to beat up a boy to set an example for other would-be teen-age snipers Jim shows no sympathy or compassion. He says to Mac, "He's not a kid, he's an example."²⁸ After the beating Jim tells Mac,

"Don't worry about it. . . .It wasn't a scared kid, it was a danger to the cause. It had to be done, and you did it right. No hate, no feeling, just a job. Don't worry."²⁹

Mac is more affected by what he did to the boy than Jim is and he tells Jim he is afraid of this "cold thought"³⁰: "God Almighty, Jim, it's not human. I'm scared of you."³¹ Jim's answer to Mac and the description of his eyes point directly to his living death:

"You and all the rest have to think of women and tobacco and liquor and keeping warm and fed." His eyes were as cold as wet river stones. "I wanted to be used. Now I'll use you, Mac. I'll use myself and you. I tell you, I feel there's strength in me."³²

Because Jim is really dead he does not require the needs of living men--women, tobacco, food, and warmth. He is a victim of death-in-life. His eyes are now like his mother's, "as cold as wet river stones." In another incident, after Jim displayed inhuman detachment and "cold thought," Mac says,

"I don't know how you do it, Jim. Everybody else loses their head but you. I heard about your old man; he wasn't a genius, all he knew was fight. I don't know where you learned to use your bean and keep clear."³³

Jim replies, "My father was like you say, but my mother was so cool she'd make you shiver."³⁴ Here Jim is comparing his mother's coldness and deadness to his own inhumanity. Jim has inadvertently become what he set out to avoid. Previously he said he wanted to avoid getting caught like his mother and father. Now, however, he has forgotten his desire to come alive again. Instead, he is a cold and dead machine--he has become a 'fallen stripped leaf' lacking the 'green element.'

Jim's spiritual or psychological death leads directly to his physical death, for as he loses his sense of the green element, of

the will to live, he also begins to lose his body. He is shot in the arm and there are suggestions that infection is setting in and slowly killing his whole body. (Howard Levant points out the parallels between Jim and Dan, the old man who falls from a tree and breaks his hip: "He [Dan] is drawn into an organic relationship with Jim's education and the progress of the strike through the suggestion that both he and Jim are sick with gangrene."³⁵) Just as Lisa says part of old Dan is already dead ("I know that smell. Part of 'im's dead already"³⁶) Jim too is partially dead. The bullet wound in his shoulder is swollen and stiff, and when asked by some of the men if he was one of the men shot he replies, "I'm one of 'em. I'm not the dead one. I'm the one that got away."³⁷ He is not aware of the double irony in his statement--he is a "dead one" spiritually and, partially, physically.

Steinbeck again suggests Jim's deadness through Jim's "organic relationship" with Joy who is shot just after he jumps down from a box car and persuades some 'scabs' to join the strikers. Joy's coffin, "a long, rough pine box,"³⁸ is kept for one night in the tent in which Jim sleeps. By this time Jim's wound has begun to burn and the pain throbs "down his arm and across his chest."³⁹ Steinbeck's description of Jim's awakening in the morning neatly parallels Jim with Joy's corpse in the coffin:

To Jim it seemed that he awakened out of a box. One whole side of him was encased in painful stiffness. He opened his eyes and looked about the tent. A grey and listless dawn had come. The coffin still lay in its place. . . .For a time he lay quietly looking about the tent, but at last he tried to sit up. The box of pain held him. He rolled over and climbed up to his knees, and then stood up, dropping his hurt shoulder to protect it from tension.⁴⁰

Thus, Jim is, metaphorically at least, a corpse in a coffin. He is dying, is being used or stripped, physically as well as spiritually. He is finally killed by a shotgun blast which renders him literally faceless. He has been stripped to a skeleton (has been used "down to the bone"), just as he stripped the leaf in the park.

The leaf images form a closer analogy to Jim's life when examined in relation to the image pattern in the novel developed around "face." To have a face means to have an individuality or identity. Individuality is not compatible with the aims of the Communist party nor with their most powerful weapon, "group-man."⁴¹ For the communist cause the part must be used or sacrificed for the general whole, the individual must be destroyed if necessary for the communal whole. "Group-man," the "animal,"⁴² subsumes or swallows individual faces and voices:

The crowd was changing rapidly. The eyes of the men and women were entranced. The bodies weaved slowly, in unison. No more lone cries came from lone men. They moved together, looked alike. The roar was one voice, coming from many throats.⁴³

Early in the book Nilson foretells Jim's loss of identity when he says, "a name won't mean any more to you than a number."⁴⁴ When Jim first meets Joy (who is exactly what Jim is to become) he notices Joy's face which has been battered and deformed in his work for the party:

Mac, guiding Jim by his arm, turned him toward the man on the other cot. It was impossible to tell how old he was. His face was wizened and battered, his nose crushed flat against his face; his heavy jaw sagged sideways. "This is Joy," said Mac. "Joy is a veteran, isn't you, Joy?"⁴⁵

Joy also has no individual voice for he is only capable of repeating

party slogans and cliché arguments. At one point, as Mac preaches communism to London, Mac catches himself up saying, "Christ, I stand here shooting off my face. I've got to go."⁴⁶ The phrase "shooting off my face" could hardly be meant simply as a colloquialism in view of the last scene in the novel and the image pattern developed around face. Here Steinbeck ironically implies that preaching communism means losing one's face or identity and at the same time foreshadows Jim's death.

Jim's fate is also foreshadowed as he and Mac ride in a box car to the area they hope to organize into a strike. Jim sits in the doorway of the box car looking down "until the flashing ground made him dizzy."⁴⁷ Mac warns him to be careful not to fall out: "Look you don't fall out. . . .I knew a guy once that got dizzy looking at the ground and fell right out on his face."⁴⁸ Later, as the strike reaches its climax, Jim again becomes dizzy, dizzy with "strength"⁴⁹ and certainty. He tells Mac and London that he is going to take over the strike, that he will give the orders and will enforce his authority with the rifle. The scene in which he makes his bid for power ends when he faints:

Mac cried, "What makes your eyes jump like that?"
 "A little dizzy," Jim said, and he fainted and fell off the
 box.⁵⁰

After he is revived Jim complains, "I'm dizzy."⁵¹ Therefore, Mac's fear that he might get dizzy and fall out of the box car on his face is metaphorically fulfilled. Jim becomes the victim of a feverish vertigo which finally spiritually and physically defaces him. The description of his face after he fainted and is sleeping suggests the

fainted and is sleeping suggests the stripping away of flesh to expose a skeleton:

The face was never still. The lips crept back until the teeth were exposed, until the teeth were dry; and then the lips drew down and covered them. The cheeks around the eyes twitched nervously. Once, as though striving against weight, Jim's lips opened to speak and worked on a word, but only a growling mumble was said.⁵²

Jim's identity, as well as his humanity, is being stripped away. He cannot speak, he is becoming a faceless and voiceless abstraction. At the end of the novel Jim is completely faceless and voiceless:

Jim did not move. Mac scrambled over to him, on his knees. "Did you get hit, Jim?" The figure kneeled, and the face was against the ground. "Oh, Christ!" Mac put out his hand to lift the head. He cried out, and jerked his hand away, and wiped it on his trousers, for there was no face.⁵³

Jim's fate is very similar to that of the leaf for not only is he stripped of his covering and reduced to a characterless skeleton, he is also "spun" and made dizzy like the stripped leaf ("Jim waved the stripped leaf in front of him, and spun it between his thumb and forefinger.") The thumb and forefinger of his fervent commitment to (and desire to be used by) the abstract ideals of the cause spin him and destroy him. The last leaf image in the park scene ("Jim . . . whipped the leaf skeleton across his palm") also reflects a part of Jim's fate, for just as the fleshless or faceless leaf skeleton whipped the palm of Jim's hand, Jim's faceless corpse is used by Mac in the last scene of the book to incite the strikers, to whip them into a formless violent mob.

The implications of the leaf expand or proliferate further when its indices are read in relation to two other image patterns (which are also interrelated), which might be called Paradise Lost images or echoes

and tree imagery.

The analogy between Paradise Lost and In Dubious Battle is not explicit. The most obvious clue that there are any similarities between the two works is the title, taken from Book I of Paradise Lost. Steinbeck avoids a thorough-going allegory by using particulars which suggest or echo (rather than equal or carry a definite one-to-one relationship with) Paradise Lost. As a result the realistic significance of these particulars is not drowned out by an overt allegorical significance and they will not fit into a strict allegorical pattern. Steinbeck, then, uses a number of realistic particulars to suggest loose parallels between Paradise Lost and the situation presented in his novel. The communist strike organizers suggest Satan and his followers (the 'reds'); Bolter, Hunter and the 'good' citizens of Torgas Valley (the owners of the big fruit orchards, the banks and finance companies, and the controllers of the Fruit Grower's Association) parallel God's establishment (the 'capitalists'); and caught between these two protagonists are the small farmers and the workers with their families who resemble the naive and innocent Adam and Eve (the 'humans'). Steinbeck suggests these parallels a number of times. The description of Bolter, the president of the Fruit Grower's Association and therefore the representative of all the owners of the larger orchards in the valley (and the controller of the smaller farmers), sounds very similar to the Sunday school Santa Claus God, the white-haired and benevolent president of the Garden of Eden:

In a moment London came into the tent, and the stranger followed him, a chunky, comfortable-looking man dressed in a grey business suit. His cheeks were pink and shaven, his hair nearly white. Wrinkles of good nature radiated from the corners of his eyes. On his mouth an open, friendly smile appeared every time he spoke.⁵⁴

The newcomer smiled. His teeth were white and even. "My name's Bolter," he said simply. "I own a big orchard. I'm the new president of the Fruit Grower's Association of this valley."⁵⁵

Bolter (God) is the big orchard owner who refuses to allow the workers (Adam and Eve) to eat the apples in the orchards of Torgas Valley (Garden of Eden). Mac, who calls Bolter "Sonny Boy,"⁵⁶ is the communist serpent who instigates strikes and apple-eating. Mac explains to London that the communists are simply trying to make it possible for the common worker to eat an apple without being punished for it. He says that when the men strike together this may be possible:

"Maybe a guy can get an apple for himself without going to jail for it, see? Maybe they won't dump apples in the river to keep up the price. Whenguys like you and me need an apple to keep our Goddam bowels open, see?"⁵⁷

Mac goes on to say that the strike is really a revolution and that the owners of the orchards will fight to keep their land and to keep dumping apples:

"It's a revolution against hunger and cold. The three guys that own this valley are going to raise hell to keep that land, and to keep dumping the apples to raise the price. A guy that thinks food ought to be eaten is a God-damned red. D'you see that?"⁵⁸

Thus, anybody that thinks apples should be eaten is a red, a "God-damned" fallen angel, a comrade of the Devil. Steinbeck uses the description of Bolter to suggest the heavenly protagonists of Paradise Lost and Mac's communist philosophy of the right of the workers to eat apples to suggest the rebelling protagonists of the underworld.

Steinbeck also uses the profanity of the working man's speech to echo Paradise Lost. His prime concern in using profanity in his dialogue is to portray realistically the worker's language. When asked

by his publisher Steinbeck refused to change any of the dialogue in In Dubious Battle:

"A working man bereft of his profanity is a silent man I've used only those expressions that are commonly used. I hope it won't be necessary to remove them. To try to reproduce the speech of these people and to clean it up is to make it sound stiff, unnatural and emasculated. I think it is vulgar only in the Latin sense."⁵⁹

However, much of the profanity in the dialogue of In Dubious Battle is conceptually as well as realistically significant for it further suggests the parallels to Paradise Lost. Most of the "hells" and "God-damns" therefore have a two-fold purpose. For example, the superintendent (one of God's angels) tells London that if the strike continues the owners will make it impossible for the workers to "get a job this side of hell."⁶⁰ Joy tells Jim, "I been beat to hell"⁶¹ and Al Anderson, who wants to join the party, tells Mac that his father is furious at him for getting involved in the strike: "says I can go to hell if I string along with you. He was mad as a hornet, Mac."⁶² "Raise hell,"⁶³ "damn radicals"⁶⁴ and "God-damned red"⁶⁵ are other examples of profanity which suggest that the strike organizers parallel the Devil's party (and the workers the seduced Adam and Eve) in Paradise Lost.⁶⁶

The leaf images and the Paradise Lost pattern of echoes are related in the sense that a fallen leaf is a fallen angel or a comrade of the Devil. When Jim becomes a member of the party he becomes a fallen angel, a fallen leaf. In two other instances in the novel there are descriptions of falling leaves and in each case Mac has just succeeded in gaining support for the strike. In the first instance Mac wins London and the workers whom he leads over to

the Devil's side by helping London's daughter have a baby. After the birth of the child (which parallels the birth of the strike) Jim and Mac lie down to sleep and leaves fall on them: "The willows stirred over their heads, and a few leaves fell down on the men."⁶⁷ Later, Jim and Mac visit Mr. Anderson to persuade him to allow the striking workers to camp on his land. Mac knows that Anderson is not much better off than the ordinary worker because most of his small farm is owned by the finance company. He uses this knowledge to manipulate Anderson into agreeing to allow the strikers to use his land. Anderson therefore becomes a fallen leaf, a supporter of the Devil. One of the particulars used to describe Anderson's house as Mac arrives to speak with him is fallen leaves: "a Virginia creeper, dropping its red leaves, hung over the porch."⁶⁸ These two leaf images, by suggesting the 'fall' of Anderson and the workers, contribute to the Paradise Lost pattern of echoes for they suggest the fall of Adam and Eve, the innocent workers in the Garden of Eden.

The tree imagery is directly related to the leaf imagery and also contributes to the Paradise Lost echoes. Most of the characters in the novel are or become fallen leaves--they are not able to live as green leaves on the Tree of Life. The use of the self and the use of others for an abstract cause (an end other than Life itself) are the causes for their fall from the Tree of Life. Mac and Jim use themselves for communism and use others, such as Anderson and Old Dan, for the same abstract end. Bolter and Hunter use themselves and others for the profit system. The use of the self (so-called 'sacrifice') and the use of naive victims for a non-life end inevitably leads to death--the used fall from the Tree of Life and lose the

ability to live the 'green life.'

In The Log From the Sea of Cortez Steinbeck distinguishes between the starfish biologist who proliferates in all directions (and who would have time to watch "how leaves come out") and the "dry-ball" biologist who shrinks up and is only interested in the use of corpses (who would turn leaves into hand-like skeletons):

We sat on a crate of oranges and thought what good men most biologists are, the tenors of the scientific world--tempermental, moody, lecherous, loud-laughing, and healthy. Once in a while one comes on the other kind--what used in the university to be called a "dry-ball"--but such men are not really biologists. They are the embalmers of the field, the picklers who see only the preserved form of life without any of its principle. Out of their own crusted minds they create a world wrinkled with formaldehyde. The true biologist deals with life, with teeming boisterous life, and learns something from it, learns that the first rule of life is living. The dry-balls cannot possibly learn a thing every starfish knows in the core of his soul and in the vesicles between his rays. He must, so know the starfish and the student biologist who sits at the feet of living things, proliferate in all directions. Having certain tendencies, he must move along their lines to the limit of their potentialities. And we have known biologists who did proliferate in all directions: one or two have had a little trouble about it. Your true biologist will sing you a song as loud and off-key as will a blacksmith, for he knows that morals are too often diagnostic of prostatitis and stomach ulcers. Sometimes he may proliferate a little too much in all directions, but he is as easy to kill as any other organism, and meanwhile he is very good company, and at least he does not confuse a low hormone productivity with moral ethics.⁶⁹

The characters in In Dubious Battle may be divided into three camps: the "dry-balls," the "true biologists," and those who are corrupted, who fall from the Tree of Life. The "dry-balls" are the communist and capitalist manipulators--Mac, Jim, Bolter, Hunter, the banks and finance companies. The "true biologists" are Doc Burton who says, "I don't believe in the cause, but I believe in men,"⁷⁰ and Lisa who, when asked what would make her happy, says she would like to have a cow so she could make cheese and butter and feed her child

warm milk.⁷¹ Lisa's desires are ironically contrasted with those of Mac the communist and Bolter the capitalist who, in the preceding scene, have been arguing. Lisa, always with her child, suggests life and fertility which quietly move on in the midst of destructive masculine abstractions. Finally, there are those who are corrupted such as Anderson and Old Dan.

As Jim and Old Dan pick apples together, Dan describes his life as a top-faller. He is proud of his work as a top-faller and enjoyed his life in the woods. As a top-faller Dan was able to live Steinbeck's concept of the ideal life. He proliferated in all directions, he climbed the highest trees in the woods, was sensually aware of life and participated in life to the limit of his potentialities. Once up in a tree Dan did not plot death and destruction like the Wobblies (and like Satan who, as he sits on the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, plots the destruction of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost):

"I wasn't no Wobbly," he said. "I'm a top-faller. Them Wobblies was a bunch of double-crossin' sons-of-bitches, but they done the work. Damn it, they'd burn down a sawmill as quick as they'd look at it . . . They was a tough bunch," said Dan. "A man couldn't take no pleasure talkin' to 'em. They hated ever'thing."⁷²

Dan worked and lived--he was a Zorba-the-Greek top-faller who realized that "the first rule of life is living." When Jim tells Dan that he was used and that he got nothing from his work Dan answers,

"I got things out of it while I was at it," he said. "I'd go up a pole, and I'd know that the boss and the owner of the timber and the president of the company didn't have the guts to do what I was doing. It was me. I'd look down on ever'thing from up there. And ever'thing looked small, and the men were little, but I was up

there. I was my own size. I got things out of it, all right."⁷³

Dan was not interested in profit or in the dry-ball owners who were shrivelled up far below him. He was alive and he was his whole self while he was up the tree. At first Dan is not interested in Jim's ideas and the strike (just as he had nothing to do with the Wobblies). When Jim tries to fire him up by telling him that he could lead the pickets, Dan is more interested in food, in the taste of eggs and meat:

"The men would respect an old worker like you. You could lead the pickets."

"I s'pose I could," said Dan. He wiped his nose with a big hand and flicked his fingers." I just don't want to. It's going to get cold early this afternoon. I'd like a little hot soup for supper--hot as hell, with little bits of meat in it, and some hot toast to soak in it. I love poached eggs. When I used to come to town out of the woods, with money, sometimes I'd get me half a dozen eggs poached in milk, and let 'em soak into toast. An then I'd mash the eggs up into the toast, and I'd eat 'em. Sometimes eight eggs. I made good pay in the woods. I could just as easy of got two dozen poached eggs. I wish I had. Lots of butter, an' all sprinkled with pepper."⁷⁴

However, Dan's enthusiasm for life is slowly being killed--he is getting old and tired, he can feel the strike trouble coming and he simply wants "to die and get shut of it."⁷⁵ Jim's continual strike-talk is the final cause of Old Dan's fall from the Tree of Life for, angered by Jim, he breaks through some rungs in the ladder and falls from the apple tree. Dan becomes a fallen leaf. In the scene of Dan's fall from the tree Steinbeck brings together three image patterns--those of the leaf, the tree, and the hand. Hand imagery is linked with leaf imagery in the park scene when the stripped leaf is called a "hand-like skeleton." Moments before Dan falls from the tree his hand is described--"One big, bony hand

clung to a branch."⁷⁶ The implication created by the relation of these images is that Dan, who used to be a green leaf at the top of the Tree of Life, has been stripped to a skeleton and is now desperately trying to cling to the Tree of Life. He cannot, however, for physically he is old and spiritually he has been stripped by the system. Dan's fall and his broken hip are the starting signals for the strike as well as symbols of his loss of the 'green life.' Believing that he is the leader of the men Dan becomes totally involved in the strike--he never again mentions the woods and his job as a top-faller. From the moment of his fall from the tree Dan is a dead man--spiritually, for he loses his ability to proliferate in all directions, and physically, for gangrene sets into his hip and slowly kills his body. Lisa's aliveness and fertility were used as a contrast to Bolter's and Mac's deadness and are again used as a contrast to Dan's deadness when she is asked to look after him:

Jim said, "Sh-h." He stood from the cot so she could see Dan's sunken face.

She crept in and sat down on the extra cot. "Oh, I di'n' know. What you want me to do?"

"Nothing. Just stay with him."

She said, "I don't like 'em like that. I can smell 'em. I know that smell." She shifted nervously, covered the baby's round face to protect it from the smell.⁷⁷

Tree imagery is also used in relation to Anderson, the small orchard owner. Just as Dan took pride in his job as a top-faller, Anderson takes pride in his trees, his well-kept farm and his pointers.' When Jim first sees the farm he says, "This is nice . . . Makes a man want to live in a place like this."⁷⁸ Anderson is the "true biologist" who has carried his tendencies "to the limit of their potentialities." When Mac and Jim first meet Anderson he is

described as a nervous and energetic man:

Al's father came walking up. He was totally unlike Al, small and quick as a terrier. The energy seemed to pour out of some inner reservoir into his arms and legs, and into his fingers so that all of him was on the move all of the time. His white hair was coarse, and his eyebrows and moustache bristled. His brown eyes flitted about as restlessly as bees. Because his fingers had nothing else to do while he walked, they snapped at his sides with little rhythmic reports. When he spoke, his words were like the rest of him, quick, nervous, sharp.⁷⁹

Mac uses Anderson (which results in the burning of Al's lunch wagon and the burning of Anderson's barn, crop and pointers) and he, like Dan, is stripped from the Tree of Life. Anderson, full of anger and hatred, tells Mac and Jim what he has lost and accuses them of never touching or planting trees, or never living:

"What th' hell do I care who burned it? It's burned, the crop's burned. What do you damn bums know about it? I'll lose the place sure, now." His eyes watered with rage. "you bastards never owned nothing. You never planted trees 'an seen 'em grow an' felt 'em with your hands. You never owned a thing, never went out an' touched your own apple trees with your hands. What do you know?"⁸⁰

The parallel between Jim's life and the leaf imagery is expanded in the tree imagery. It is implied that once, as a boy, Jim participated in life as represented by a green leaf on the Tree of Life:

"Once when I was a kid one of these lodges took about five hundred of us on a picnic, took us in trucks. We walked around and around. There were big trees. I remember I climbed up in the top of a tree and sat there most of the afternoon. I thought I'd go back there every time I could. But I never did."⁸¹

It is significant that when Jim is picking apples he is not able to 'live' as he did as a boy in the tree. In the apple trees Jim is pre-occupied with party work and has no time to see "how leaves come

out" or "how an apple grows."⁸² He is now a fallen skeletal leaf and just as he never did go back to the place where he sat in the tree all afternoon, he fails to become a participating leaf on the Tree of Life. In the apple tree Jim is like Satan as he stands on the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden plotting the death of Adam and Eve:

Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.⁸³

Jim remembers the 'green life' and just before he dies he wishes he could get a leave of absence "and just sit down in an orchard."⁸⁴ Dan's description of the woods and what it was like to be a top-faller move Jim and, when he is telling Mac that he has "never looked at the way things happen,"⁸⁵ he says he would like to go into the woods of Canada sometime because of "the way Old Dan talks about timber_____."⁸⁶ However, Jim and Mac can never partake of the life-giving force of Dan's trees or of Anderson's trees. Instead they use life for an abstract end, they pervert the Tree of Life into the Tree of Death. They are like the dry-ball biologist who is interested only in the wrinkled corpses of specimens in formaldehyde and their use in supporting some abstract theory. Jim and Mac use the bodies they have directly or indirectly caused to be killed or maimed (Joy's corpse, Dan's dying body, Burke's broken body and finally Jim's corpse) to create "group-man" and further the cause.

As Mac takes the lid off Joy's coffin to look at Joy he says to Burton,

"If you think this is sentiment, your'e nuts, Doc. I want to see if it'd be a good idea for the guys to look at him tomorrow. We got to shoot some juice into 'em some way. They're dyin' on their feet."⁸⁷

When Burton answers, "Fun with dead bodies, huh?"⁸⁸, he is not referring only to Joy's body but also to the dead individuals which make up "group-man." The "juice" Mac wants to shoot into the workers with Joy's corpse is, from Burton's point of view, embalming fluid. Thus Mac and Jim are truly "embalmers of the field," are the cormorants sitting in the Tree of Life devising death. Like Satan they pervert life to its meanest use and they rationalize their callous use of life by the argument of necessity. When Doc Burton says he feels sorry for Anderson, Mac answers,

"We can't help it, Doc. He happens to be the one that's sacrificed for the men. Somebody has to break if the whole bunch is going to get out of the slaughter-house. We can't think about the hurts of one man. It's necessary, Doc."⁸⁹

Satan, in Paradise Lost, excuses his destructive plans with the same argument:

"And, should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just--
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged
By conquering this new World--compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor."
So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.⁹⁰

The "dry-balls," Mac, Jim and Satan, are intent on using life in order to overthrow an abstract system and replace it with their own tyrannical abstract system and they use the argument of necessity to excuse the

means they use.

In their fervent commitment to the party Mac and Jim not only use others but also use themselves. In their blind self-use they forget about living--as Mac says, taking a bite of a "small, misshapen apple,"⁹¹ "God, that tastes good. I'd forgot about apples. Always forget what's so easy."⁹² Mac's interest in live things is only for their use for the party--he is never interested in life for itself and he cannot understand someone like Doc Burton who becomes involved with life for no other ulterior purpose. Mac shows a great deal of interest in Anderson's dogs and when Jim asks him if he likes dogs Mac answers "irritably," "I like anything."⁹³ Mac knows that Anderson is proud of his pointers and his interest in the dogs is simply a means of furthering the cause, a tool used to manipulate Anderson. When Burton sees the beautiful pointers his reaction is that of the "true biologist": "Did you see those pointers of Anderson's? Beautiful dogs; they give me a sensual pleasure, almost sexual."⁹⁴ Mac cannot understand Burton's reaction to the dogs, the appreciation of life for itself:

"D'you hear that, Jim? That'll show you what Burton is. Here's a couple of fine dogs, good hunting dogs, but they're not dogs to Doc, they're feelings. They're dogs, to me."⁹⁵

Mac is unable to experience these "feelings" because he can only see the functional use of life. He is the practical man who values things only in so far as they are useful to the cause. Mac helps Lisa give birth to her child for the same reason he takes an interest in Anderson's pointers. He has never seen a birth before but he knows that if he helps London's daughter he will be able to use London to

start a strike. He explains to Jim, "We've got to use whatever material comes to us. That was a lucky break. We simply had to take it.

'Course it was nice to help the girl, but hell, even if it killed her--we've got to use anything."⁹⁶ Mac, who has never before seen a birth, is unable to appreciate life happening because he is so completely involved with establishing communism. Mac's inability to participate in life is also implied in tree imagery. The trees in the Garden of Eden were created to be sensually appreciated:

In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold;⁹⁷

Mac, however, is unable to experience the sensual "feelings" which Doc Burton describes. When Anderson accuses Mac of never planting trees or touching them with his hands, Mac answers, "We'd like to own something and plant trees."⁹⁸ Mac's statement is not true. He wants "messes," not trees. When Jim tells Mac that he feels he is missing something in life, that he never has time to look at things, Mac says,

"You can't see everything I took a leave and went into the woods in Canada. Say, in a couple of days I came running out of there. I wanted trouble, I was hungry for a mess."⁹⁹

Mac's continual use of himself for the party has spiritually killed him. He is unable to "proliferate in all directions" and he has forgotten, if he ever knew, that the "first rule of life is living." Jim, too, is caught up in a suicidal commitment to the cause and,

even though he remembers how he lived in the tree as a boy and knows that he is missing something very important, is destroyed. Mac and Jim, by becoming totally involved with an abstract ideology and trying to establish it, become only a part of themselves and can no longer take part in the flux of life. Burton tells Mac,

"you people have an idea that if you can establish the thing, the job'll be done. Nothing stops, Mac. If you were able to put an idea into effect tomorrow, it would start changing right away. Establish a commune, and the same gradual flux will continue."¹⁰⁰

Mac and Jim are like Yeats' Irish revolutionaries whose self-sacrifice makes "a stone of the heart."¹⁰¹ They are the stones who "trouble the living stream":

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.¹⁰²

The leaf image proliferates in many directions. It expands structurally into a pattern and into other image patterns (face, eye, hand, tree and Paradise Lost); it reflects character and personality changes; and it carries the implied theme or philosophy of the novel. The leaf image expands from a simple realistic detail to a microcosmic image which, through its relation with the whole novel, becomes the novel--the leaf is the novel, a grain of sand is the world.

Another pattern of imagery in In Dubious Battle which often crosses paths with the series of images discussed above is animal imagery. These images also form patterns and accumulate conceptual significance when examined in the context of the whole struggle

presented in the novel. Like the leaf image their main connotation is "use," exploitation, and sacrifice which lead to spiritual and physical death.

One set of animal images used to describe the workers suggests that they are test animals, the guinea pigs which are manipulated and brainwashed by the "dry-ball" scientists of political ideologies. In the worker's camp (the one provided by the orchard owners) the children are described as rats: "In and out of the dark doorways children swarmed, restless as rats"¹⁰³ and in the striker's camp (on Anderson's land) the women are described as crawling "like rodents from the tents."¹⁰⁴ When Mac fails to arouse the workers to fight he says, "why even a God-damn rat'll fight when he's in a trap."¹⁰⁵ Early in the strike storm clouds begin to build and Mac worries about the effect rain will have on the workers--"It'll drown this bunch like rats."¹⁰⁶ When it begins to rain he says, "by morning the guys'll be drowned rats. They won't have no more spirit than a guinea pig."¹⁰⁷ Jim compares his life in the capitalist system to that of a rat in a rat-cage: "I don't think I resented the fact that someone profited from the mess, but I did hate being in the rat-cage."¹⁰⁸ All of these images suggest the spiritual or psychological exploitation of the worker by the communist and capitalist psychologists. Mac is especially adept at probing people's minds in order to use them, at brainwashing individuals and whipping them up to create the destructive animal group-man.

Many of the animal images used to describe the workers carry implications of herd and slaughter. Mac refers to the army men in France as "good, honest, stupid cattle."¹⁰⁹ When Jim describes how

the strikers "kicked hell out of"¹¹⁰ the scabs, Mac admits how horrible it is but says, "It's not nice to see sheep killed, either, but we've got to have mutton."¹¹¹ One of the workers, arguing for strike, says, "If we take dirt like a bunch of lousy sheep then the cotton people will nick us deeper"¹¹²; Mac calls the workers "God-damn sheep"¹¹³; and the mob which surrounds Joy after he is shot is described as "sheep about a nucleus."¹¹⁴ The workers are often compared to pigs: Dan complains, "we move about the country like a bunch of hogs and get beat on the ass by a college boy"¹¹⁵; Jim calls the workers "swine"¹¹⁶ and Mac tells London that reds are "a bunch of guys that want to help you live like a man, and not like a pig."¹¹⁷ The food which the strikers are forced to eat often suggests the feed used for herd animals. Burke tells the workers that they have to live on "garbage a pig wouldn't touch."¹¹⁸ Mac tells Jim, "We're going to have rolled oats, straight, for breakfast, no suger or no milk--just oats"¹¹⁹ and this same breakfast is referred to as "boiled cow food."¹²⁰ These images suggest the physical exploitation of the working men. They are herded together like cattle, sheep or pigs and led to the slaughter-house by the communist and capitalist manipulators. The crowd-masters, Mac and Bolter, have abstract and selfish motives, the paradoxically selfish yet unselfish desire to establish the communist utopia and the desire for money. Both the communists and the capitalists manipulate and exploit concrete life for an abstract end. Jim's father is one of the victims of the capitalist slaughter-house. He actually worked in a slaughter-house as a sticker. Ironically he is the herd animal which is slaughtered for he is killed trying to dynamite the slaughter-house. Jim's description of his father

when his daughter disappears implies that he is the stunned animal on the slaughter floor: "He acted just as though he'd been hit between the eyes--slugged."¹²¹ Jim feels that it is the system run by such men as Bolter and Hunter which butchered his father. (Steinbeck's use of names also expands the pattern of animal imagery--Judge Hunter is the hunter of the herd animal, he brings them to the slaughterhouse and Bolter, the owner of the large orchard, is the greedy eater of the slaughtered--his name suggests bolting and he has "white even teeth"¹²²). The strikers are herded together and used by Mac and Jim. Mac knows that the men are like cattle and that at the sight or smell of blood will herd together and stampede. He tells Jim that after the men picket the "scabs" they will be ready for manipulation: "By tomorrow night enough guys will be bruised up and mad so they'll be meat for us."¹²³ Towards the end of the strike, when there is no hope for its success, Mac persists in using the workers to further the cause. Just as he told Jim that he would use him to the bone he wants to use the workers to the bone (it is significant that Mac tells London, when the men are slaughtering three animals for food, to save everything: "London, don't let 'em waste anything. Save all the bones and heads and feet for soup"¹²⁴). Mac tells London that the men should stay and fight even though the sheriff has just warned them that sub-machine guns and Mills bombs will be used on them if they do not leave the county. London argues,

"Yeah, but if he brings the stuff he said, pineapples an' stuff, it ain't goin' to be no more fight than the stockyards."¹²⁵

Thus, both Mac and Bolter are the slaughterers of the workers--they

both create herds (working masses, picket mobs and vigilante mobs) for exploitation. Mac, of course, does not think of himself as a butcher but as a savior who must take upon himself the responsibility of sacrificing not only himself but others for the cause.

The party men and the party sympathizers are referred to by animal images which imply both meanings of "use"--sacrifice as well as exploitation. They feel that they are sacrificing themselves to free the worker from the capitalist's slaughter-house. Therefore, when they are referred to as cows or paralleled with a bull calf, the implication is not so much of herd slaughter as of sacrifice. Al is a party sympathizer and is not really a part of the herd. When we first see him he is described as a cow: "he was in his motions, as inwardly-thoughtful-looking as a ruminating cow."¹²⁶ This image expands in significance when examined in relation to other animal images and in the context of Al's fate. He is found out by vigilantes and they burn down his lunch wagon and beat him almost killing him. Thus, Al becomes the sacrificed cow, one of the individuals who "has to break if the whole bunch is going to get out of the slaughter-house."¹²⁷

Jim and Joy are also sacrificial animals. When Joy's body is brought back to the camp, his death is paralleled with the killing of a pig:

Burton said, "Bring him to my tent. I'll look him over." From behind the tents a hoarse, bubbling scream broke out. All of the men turned, frozen at the sound. Burton said, "Oh, they're killing a pig. One of the cars brought back a live pig. Bring this body to my tent."¹²⁸

The scream of the pig which freezes the men echoes the "swishing scream"¹²⁹ of the steam from the train in front of which Joy is shot.

The deaths of Joy and Jim are paralleled with the slaughtering of the bull calf:

Two men on the sides held the plunging calf. Mac slugged it to its knees. Albert drove in the knife and cut the artery open and jumped back from the spurting blood. The calf leaped, and then settled slowly down. It's chin rested flat on the ground, and it's legs folded up. The thick, carmine blood pool spread out on the wet ground.¹³⁰

Joy had stopped, his eyes wide. His mouth flew open and a jet of blood rolled down his chin, and down his shirt. His eyes ranged wildly over the crowd of men. He fell on his face Suddenly the steam stopped; and the quietness fell on the men like a wave of sound. The line of strikers stood still, with strange, dreaming faces. Joy lifted himself up with his arms, like a lizard, and then dropped again. A little thick river of blood ran down on the crushed rock of the roadbed.¹³¹

The parallel between Joy and the calf is suggested by the description of the blood jetting from Joy's mouth and the calf's neck, the position of the bodies and the blood running onto the ground. The similarity of Jim's sacrificial death to that of the calf is more striking. The afternoon before he is killed Mac warns Jim to keep under the cover of the trees: "keep back of the line of trees. Your'e standing out like a cow on a side-hill."¹³² When Jim is shot, his position is exactly that of the calf (and the description has deliberate religious overtones):

The figure kneeled, and the face was against the ground . . . He [Mac] looked at the figure, kneeling in the position of Moslem prayer.¹³³

The parallel is carried further in the descriptions of the transporting of the slaughtered bull calf and cows back to camp and the carrying of Jim's corpse back to Camp:

He backed his truck to the animals and the men lifted the limp, heavy

creatures up on the bed, and let the heads hang loosely over so that they might bleed on the ground.¹³⁴

Mac stood up, stiffly. He leaned over and picked Jim up and slung him over his shoulder, like a sack; and the dripping head hung down behind.¹³⁵

Jim's and Joy's role as sacrificed animals is further suggested by the wooden platform Mac has built in order to display Joy's coffin to the workers. This platform becomes both pulpet and altar for Mac's 'religious' rites to his god, communism. From the platform he uses Joy's corpse, that is sacrifices it, and gives a sermon on communism. Burton comments on Mac's ability as a preacher:

"You surely know how to work them, Mac No preacher ever brought people to the mourners' bench quicker. Why didn't you keep it up awhile? You'd've had them talking in tongues and holy-rolling in a minute."¹³⁶

When Jim is killed the religious ceremony is repeated. Mac, now a machine like Jim's mother, his face "frozen," carries Jim's body to the platform:

He came to the platform. He deposited the figure under the handrail and leaped to the stand. He dragged Jim across the boards and leaned him against the corner post, and steadied him when he slipped sideways.

London handed the lantern up, and Mac set it carefully on the floor, beside the body, so that its light fell on the head. He stood up and faced the crowd. His hands gripped the rail. His eyes were wide and white. In front he could see the massed men, eyes shining in the lamplight. Behind the front row, the men were lumped and dark. Mac shivered. He moved his jaws to speak, and seemed to break the frozen jaws loose. His voice was high and monotonous. "This guy didn't want nothing for himself__" he began. His knuckles were white, where he grasped the rail. "Comrades! He didn't want nothing for himself____"¹³⁷

There are a number of ambiguities and ironies implied through the animal imagery. First, the implication already mentioned, Mac

is just as much an exploiter of the workers as the orchard owners. Mac and Jim are not aware that they are in reality creating the same kind of "rat-trap" and slaughter-house created by the system of Bolter and Hunter. Both the communists and the capitalists are destroying the men Burton believes in, the "teeming, boistrous life" which the true biologist believes in. The only real difference between the two slaughter-houses is in the motives of the slaughterers. The capitalist's motive, as presented in the novel, is straightforward and obviously selfish--profit. Mac's and Jim's motive, on the other hand, is more ambiguous. On the surface their use of others and their sacrifice of themselves appears unselfish--"he didn't want nothing for himself____." But their motives are really just as selfish as Bolter's and Hunter's for they really do want something--they want to establish the commune and in order to do this they use the very people they are supposedly saving. The animal imagery also posits the question, what is the difference between sacrifice and exploitation? If Mac and Jim do have a selfish motive (which they are unaware of) their sacrifice of others and themselves is really exploitation. Mac, Joy and Jim, although they think of themselves as Christs, are really unintentional Satans. Their sacrifices do not revive life, they destroy it in the name of an abstraction. Jim's motives are more complex than the other party members for they are transformed. In the beginning Jim does the wrong thing for the right reason--he joins the party in order to come alive again, to make "the first rule of life living." While in the party his motives change and he succumbs to the Fourth Tempter of Murder in the Cathedral--he does the right thing for the wrong reason. His reason is now no longer life--it is

power and the cause. He tells Mac and London that he will give the orders now and that he will use the rifle to enforce his authority (he later describes his feeling of strength--"I could of lifted a cow last night"¹³⁸). There is now little difference between Jim's system and the capitalist slaughter-house--the sledge hammer and sticker of the capitlist bosses is simply replaced by the hammer and sickle of the communist bosses. Jim becomes involved with a theory in order to regain life and ultimately sacrifices himself (and worse, others) for the power and theory instead of for life.

Again, it must be stressed that Steinbeck is not condemning Mac and Jim. Their motives are much more commendable than the capitalists. They are the rebels who must overthrow the establishment. However, Steinbeck dramatizes the danger inherent in every revolution, the danger that the revolutionaries themselves will become tyrants, that the rebel Orc will simply trade places with the tyrant Urizen. Mac and Jim, in the process of overthrowing the "dry-ball" Urizen, lose their sense of life and become Urizen themselves. Their struggle is, therefore, ironically tragic, but, the fact that the struggle has taken place is indicative of the possibility of escape from the slaughter-house--even though Mac and Jim fall victims to the Orc-Urizen cycle and become still-born Christs their struggle suggests the possibility of the rebel to pass from the state of Orc to something other than the state of Urizen. This process does not imply a lack of commitment to a cause--in fact it demands a complete commitment, a commitment not to communism or capitalism but to Life.

CHAPTER II

PROPHETIC IMAGES IN THE GRAPES OF WRATH

The Grapes of Wrath is Steinbeck's most frequently discussed novel and its images, symbols, prose styles, and myth have been examined more or less adequately in many ways. The main interest of this chapter will be an examination of the turtle as a prophetic image. I hope to illustrate that the turtle in The Grapes of Wrath is as complex and organic a symbol as, for example, the whale is in Melville's Moby Dick.

Two chapters in The Grapes of Wrath which have attracted particular attention from the critics are those describing the land turtle (Chapter Three) and Rose of Sharon's breast feeding of the old and starving men (Chapter Thirty). Many critics are violently opposed to The Grapes of Wrath because of these sections and others like them--Fiedler in Waiting For the End says that The Grapes of Wrath is "sentimental entertainment (hoked up with heavy-handed symbolism)"¹ and in An End to Innocence that it is "marred by maudlin social piety and turgid symbolism"² and, finally, in No! in Thunder that,

The Grapes of Wrath [is] the prototype of the pious tract disguised as a sociological report in which the cruel exploiters of labor are contrasted with simple and kindly men who give candy to children, and women of the people who offer their swollen breasts to the starving unemployed.³

Another critic, Burgum, criticises the last scene in the novel because there is not enough symbolism in the novel:

The scene of the proffer of the mother's milk to the starving old man, on the practical level, is a useless gesture of aid, and to be acceptable must be taken as pure symbolism. But since there has been no preparation for symbolism in the antecedent action, the reader follows the attitudes the book has set up in him, and rejects the conclusion as an unpleasant bit of realism instead.⁴

When Fiedler's and Burgum's criticisms are read side by side, it is obvious that something is amiss. Both critics have oversimplified Steinbeck's use of symbolism. Steinbeck's symbolism is much more subtle and integral to the work than Fiedler suggests and the "antecedent action" does adequately prepare the reader for the climatic breast-feeding scene. Both Fiedler and Burgum also misread Steinbeck's use of realism--Fiedler accuses Steinbeck of smuggling "political propaganda, heavy-handed symbolism, righteous pornography and sentimentality"⁵ into "the presumably objective laboratory"⁶ of realism and naturalism while Burgum finds it impossible to read the last scene of the novel as both realistic and symbolic. The description of the turtle and the last scene in the novel are beautiful examples of Steinbeck's ability to perfectly meld realism and symbolism.⁷ Other critics, notably Peter Lisca, Kenneth Burke and Joseph Fontenrose, give a much more detailed and valid criticism of Steinbeck's use of images and symbols in The Grapes of Wrath. Kenneth Burke's discussion of the function of the turtle as a "kind of externalizing vessel"⁸ for "tying together Tom, Casey and the plot"⁹ is especially pertinent to this thesis for it treats the turtle as a prophetic image, a detail which expands and contains the whole novel. Burke describes it as follows:

The whole thing works out quite neatly. The turtle's (explicitly stated) aimless wandering, over the dry soil, "foreshadows" (or implicitly prophesies) the drought-pervaded trek with which Tom and Casey will be identified. Its wandering across the parched earth is "representative" of the migration in a stream of traffic on the dry highways. It contains implicitly, in "chordal collapse," a destiny that the narrative will unfold explicitly, in "arpeggio."¹⁰

Burke shows how the turtle links Tom, Casey, and the plot:

We have Tom's homecoming, after prison, with this turtle in his pocket (i.e., "bearing the future plot with him," as a Bellerophontic letter); Tom's release of the turtle (which is proclaimed by Casey to be another Casey--thereby interweaving Casey and Tom); when Casey dies (with a variant of Christ's "Forgive them, for they know not what they do" as his last words), Tom establishes the consubstantiality of his cause with Casey's, first by avenging Casey, next by voicing his same philosophy of new political awareness ("God, I'm talking with Casey"), and lastly by being a fugitive from the same vessels of authority that had killed Casey.¹¹

Thus, the turtle is very similar to the leaf in In Dubious Battle--they are both collapsed chords which are heard in the beginnings of the novels and which are expanded into explicit arpeggios in the complete novels. The leaf which Jim strips certainly acts as a Bellerophontic letter--Jim is bearing his own death-warrant. However, Burke does not show in detail how the turtle contains the whole novel through its relation to other images, image patterns, rhythms, characters, incidents, plot, and theme.

As in In Dubious Battle the characters in The Grapes of Wrath proliferate into each other, each character is organically related to the others. In The Grapes of Wrath the turtle is one of the many threads which knits a number of characters together into a 'character complex.' Tom, Casey, Ma, Rose of Sharon, Grandma and the children are all directly or indirectly connected with the turtle. As Burke points out, Casey compares himself to the turtle:

"Every kid got a turtle some time or other. Nobody can't keep a turtle though. They work at it and work at it, and at last one day they get out and away they go--off somewheres. It's like me. I wouldn't take the good ol' gospel that was just layin' there to my hand. I got to be pickin' at it an' workin' at it until I got it all tore down."¹²

Casey's persistence in thinking things out (which is carried on throughout the novel) is like the turtle's persistence in escaping. However, not only Casey's persistence but also his physical features link him with the turtle. In fact, the description of Casey's head, neck, eyes, lids, cheeks, mouth and nose is an exact description of a turtle's features:

It was along head, bony, tight of skin, and set on a neck as stringy and muscular as a celery stalk. His eyeballs were heavy and protruding; the lids stretched to cover them, and the lids were raw and red. His cheeks were brown and shiny and hairless and his mouth full--humorous or sensual. The nose, beaked and hard, stretched the skin so tightly that the bridge showed white. There was no perspiration on the face, not even on the tall pale forehead. It was an abnormally high forehead lined with delicate blue veins at the temples.¹³

Casey's "stringy and muscular" neck is described a number of times throughout the novel and in each case he is 'working at' something. As he looks Tom over at their first meeting "the strained bundle of neck muscles stood out"¹⁴; as he explains to Tom and Muley that he has been thinking things out and that he may have found a solution ("I think I got her now. I don't know if I can say her") "the hundred muscles of his neck stood out in high relief"¹⁵) and, when he gives himself up to the police in order to save Tom and Floyd the "stringy muscles of his neck"¹⁶ stand out. In each of these instances Casey is working at something, straining like the turtle to climb the highway embankment or escape from Tom's coat. The description of the turtle parallels that of Casey. It has a "hard old head,"¹⁷ an "old, hard humorous

head,"¹⁸ and a "straining head."¹⁸ Its nose is described as a "horny beak"¹⁹ and its eyes as "fierce, humorous"²⁰ and "humorous frowning."²¹ Casey's eyes are "sharp and merry."²² Steinbeck does not describe the eye-lids and neck of the land turtle, but the descriptions of Casey's protruding eyeballs and the lids stretched to cover them and of his neck muscles when he lifts his head are identical to the features of a land turtle (see plates 84, 85 and 86 of C.H. Pope's Turtles of the United States & Canada). Thus, Casey, as he strains to overcome an obstacle, is linked with the turtle which struggles over the highway embankment. They are linked, too, in the sense that both assist life to thrive--the turtle carries oat seeds from one side of the highway to the other and plants them:

The wild oat head fell out and three of the spearhead seeds stuck in the ground. And as the turtle crawled on down the embankment, its shell dragged dirt over the seeds. The turtle entered a dust road and jerked itself along, drawing a wavy shallow trench in the dust with its shell. The old humorous eyes looked ahead, and the horny beak opened a little. His yellow toe nails slipped a fraction in the dust.²³

Casey also overcomes a blockade in the sense that he suddenly knows what he has to do and in the process assists other's lives. When he gives himself up in order to save Tom and Floyd, he resembles the turtle with its straining neck and "smile" of triumph ("the horney beak opened a little"):

Between his guards Casey sat proudly, his head up and the stringy muscles of his neck prominent. On his lips there was a faint smile and on his face a curious look of conquest.²⁴

Rose of Sharon is also related to the turtle in this theme of assisting life while overcoming great obstacles. She carries the

seed of life from one side of the road to the other, from Oklahoma to California. Even when her child is stillborn in California, she persists in aiding life and the closing lines of the novel which describe her as she feeds the starving man from her breast suggest the same triumph experienced by Casey:

Her hand moved behind his head and supported it. Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together and smiled mysteriously.²⁵

The turtle image proliferates into the scene in which Granma is sick and into the scene in which Ma buys groceries from the Hooper Ranch store. Just before crossing the "burning hot"²⁶ highway, the turtle rests from its long climb up the embankment:

The head upraised and peered over the wall to the broad smooth plain of cement. Now the hands, braced on top of the wall, strained and lifted, and the shell came slowly up and rested its front end on the wall. For a moment the turtle rested. A red ant ran into the shell, into the soft skin inside the shell, and suddenly head and legs snapped in, and the armored tail clamped in sideways. The red ant was crushed between body and legs.²⁷

The extended arpeggio of this scene takes place in Chapter Eighteen. The Joads, like the turtle, slowly climb a huge embankment, the mountains of New Mexico and Arizona. The Joad truck "crawled up the slopes"²⁸ of the high country of Arizona. Finally, "they crawled the jagged ramparts"²⁹ of the mountains and they reach California. But they still have the desert to cross (the "burning hot" highway) and Tom suggests that they stop and rest at Needles. Steinbeck subtly reinforces these parallels in the description of Granma as she lies resting in the shade of the canvas tarpaulin:

Her [Granma's] little wrinkled claws moved up and scratched her cheek. A red ant ran up the curtain cloth and scrambled over the folds of loose skin on the old lady's neck. Ma reached quickly and picked it off, crushed it between thumb and forefinger, and brushed her fingers on her dress.³⁰

The "wrinkled claws," the red ant, the "folds of loose skin" and the crushing of the ant echo the description of the turtle as it rested on the edge of the highway.³¹ Just as the highway is the most dangerous part of the turtle's trek, so is the desert the most dangerous part of the Joad's journey.

In this scene Ma is also connected with the turtle. She, in a sense, becomes the turtle's main defense, its shell, for she crushes the red ant. She does stand for the main defense of the workers, that is unity, standing together and helping each other. It is Ma that holds the family together as a form of protection for each individual and in the end Ma realizes, like Casey and Tom, that the workers must form an even more invulnerable shell for defense by creating the larger family "group-man." Steinbeck, of course, uses this as a microcosmic statement--the human race, in order to survive, must try to create a shell in mutual unity. This idea of people helping one another in order to survive is linked to the turtle image and to Ma in Chapter Twenty-six.

Just as Steinbeck used the red ant incident to expand the collapsed chord into arpeggio, he uses the description of the cat and the turtle as a means of relating the turtle image to the expanded or arpeggio scene involving Ma and the little man who runs the store owned by Hooper Ranches. The collapsed chord is sounded when Tom lets the turtle go after he has discovered that his family has abandoned their farm:

He unwrapped the land turtle and pushed it under the house. But in a moment it was out, headed southwest as it had been from the first. The cat leaped at it and struck at its straining head and slashed at its moving feet. The old, hard, humorous head was pulled in, and the thick tail slapped in under the shell, and when the cat grew tired of waiting for it and walked off, the turtle headed on southwest again.

Young Tom Joad and the preacher watched the turtle go--waving its legs and boosting its heavy, high-domed shell along toward the southwest. The cat crept along behind for a while, but in a dozen yards it arched its back to a strong taut bow and yawned, and came stealthily back toward the seated men.³²

This same scene is repeated now with Ma as the turtle, her shell being the ability of the poor to help one another in time of trouble. The cat which slashes at her, at all of the workers including the store proprietor, is the "Hooper Ranches, Incorporated."³³ This cat, however, is also impotent against the shell of unity--the store proprietor cannot give Ma sugar on credit because of the company's rules but the little man takes a dime from his own pocket and gives Ma the sugar. Ma leaves the store and Steinbeck integrates the theme of unity, the turtle image and the ineffectiveness of the company's attack (the cat):

She started for the door, and when she reached it, she turned about. "I'm learnin' one thing good," she said. "Learnin' it all a time, ever' day. If you're in trouble or hurt or need--go to poor people. They're the only ones that'll help--the only ones." The screen door slammed behind her.

The little man leaned his elbows on the counter and looked after her with his surprised eyes. A plump tortoise-shell cat leaped up on the counter and stalked lazily near to him. It rubbed sideways against his arms, and he reached out with his hand and pulled it against his cheek. The cat purred loudly, and the tip of its tail jerked back and forth.³⁴

The "plump tortoise-shell cat" is the obvious note of the arpeggio which refers back to the collapsed chord. Just as the turtle withdrew into its shell when attacked by the cat, Ma and the proprietor protect themselves through unity. The cat grows tired of waiting and the turtle (the family as all of the migrant men, and ultimately, as

the human race) continues its trek.

Tom's connection with the turtle image is very involved for the turtle reflects the change which takes place in Tom's character. In the beginning of the novel, Tom and the turtle are very similar in a number of ways. As Burke points out, Tom and the turtle are linked simply because he picks it up. But the capturing of the turtle strengthens this connection for the turtle's imprisonment in Tom's coat parallels Tom's four years of imprisonment at McAlister (the theme of imprisonment is very important in the novel and will be discussed in more detail later). Like the turtle Tom, through adversity, has drawn a physical and mental protective shell around himself. The truck driver who gives him a ride when he is returning home from prison notices his calloused and shiny hands, hardened from prison work. Even the nails have become hard shells: "His hands were hard, with broad fingers and nails as thick and ridged as little clam shells. The space between thumb and forefinger and the hams of his hands were shiny with callus."³⁵ When he returns home and finds his family at Uncle John's farm, Ma asks if he is mad and full of hate because of his imprisonment. She is worried that Tom may have been hurt inside like Purty Boy Floyd who became "a walkin' chunk a mean-mad"³⁶ because he was hurt by the authorities. But again, Tom was able to protect himself by withdrawing and letting things run off him ("But I ain't proud like some fellas. I let stuff run off'n me."³⁷) When Ma reiterates her question, "Did they make you mad . . .?"³⁸ Steinbeck, by describing Tom's nails, again implies that Tom was successful in forming a hard protective shell against this inside hurt:

He looked down at his big flat hands. "No," he said. "I ain't like that." He paused and studied the broken nails, which were ridged like clam shells. "All the time in stir I kep' away from stuff like that. I ain' so mad."³⁹

Tom is therefore linked to the turtle in the sense that he creates shell-like defenses in order to protect himself. The turtle also reflects Tom's persistence and philosophy. When Ma asks him how long it will take to get to California, he tells her that in prison he learned to live from day to day, "to think about that day, an' then the nex' day."⁴⁰ He tells Casey, "I'm jus' puttin' one foot in front a the other. I done it at Mac for four years, jus' marchin' in cell an' out cell an' in mess an' out mess,"⁴¹ "I'm still layin' my dogs down one at time,"⁴² and "I climb fences when I got fences to climb."⁴³ Tom's turtle-like persistence in going in one direction is shown in Chapter Twenty-one when the vigilantes force the Joads to turn around and travel north. Tom waits until they have left the road and then turns around and travels south again. He says to Ma, "Well, anyways they never shoved us north We still go where we want, even if we got to crawl for the right."⁴⁴

These are some of the similarities between Tom and the turtle. However, in the beginning of the novel there is one very important difference between Tom and the turtle and it is this difference which illustrates the change that takes place in Tom's character in the course of the novel. Although the turtle and Tom are similar in that they both put one foot ahead of the other and climb fences when they come to the fences, the turtle seems to have a long-range objective, a definite direction. Tom, in the beginning, does not have a long-range objective or direction even though he may travel in a straight

line. The turtle, on the other hand, always travels in the same direction. I have to disagree with Burke's statement that the turtle's movement is "aimless wandering."⁴⁵ As Tom sits and talks with Casey the turtle escapes from his coat. Tom looks over and sees the turtle "hurrying away in the direction he had been following when Joad found him."⁴⁶ When Tom lets the turtle go it again starts crawling in the direction it had pursued from the first, southwest. This is, of course, the direction which the Joads and thousands of other migrants travel to California. The turtle's wandering, therefore, is not aimless. It seems to have a definite direction. Significantly, Tom wonders where the turtle is going: "Where the hell you s'pose he's goin'? . . . I seen turtles all my life. They're always goin' someplace. They always seem to want to get there."⁴⁷ Tom says that when he was in prison he used to think of what he would do when he got out: "I'd go in a straight line way to hell an' gone an' never stop nowheres."⁴⁸ Here again Tom is like the turtle in that he would go in a straight line, but he is unlike the turtle who seems to have a definite direction or objective.

Tom's aimlessness (like Jim's in the beginning of In Dubious Battle) was partially caused by prison life. He tells Ma that it was dangerous to look ahead while in prison because "you'd go nuts."⁴⁹ When Casey tries to look ahead and asks Tom what will happen if they get to California and there are no jobs for them, Tom again explains the effect prison life has had on him--he is afraid to look ahead and gives all of his attention to the problems he is immediately concerned with:

I'm jus' puttin' one foot in front a the other. I done it at Mac for four years, jus' marchin' in cell an' out cell an' in mess an' out mess. Jesus Christ, I thought it'd be somepin different when I come

out! Couldn't think a nothin' in there, else you go stir happy, an' now can't think a nothin'." He turned on Casey. "This her bearing went out. We didn' know it was goin', so we didn' worry none. Now she's out an' we'll fix her. An' by Christ that goes for the rest of it! I ain' gonna worry. I can't do it. This here little piece of iron an' babbitt. See it? Ya see it? Well, that's the only goddam thing in the world I got on my mind. I wonder where the hell Al is."⁵⁰

Casey agrees with Tom that this is the best way to approach life, climbing fences when you come to them, but says, "they's different kinda fences. They's folks like me that climbs fences that ain't even strang up yet--an' can't he'p it."⁵¹ Casey is the visionary or God-driven prophet who must try to give his people the word, who must try to look ahead and prevent disaster. He tries to give the people an objective or direction. Tom, on the other hand, is his pupil or disciple who at first has no sense of direction, has no concept of what he is working toward. Because Tom lacks Casey's sense of direction, he becomes full of hate and hopelessness when they are forced by the vigilantes to turn and travel north--because he looks no further ahead than the immediate situation he is unable to see things in perspective and as a result is almost broken by what is simply a small setback. Ma, who like Casey is aware of the slow movement taking place in California, is able to weather these small setbacks. She consoles Tom by telling him that the people will go on:

"You got to have patience. Why, Tom--us people will go on livin' when all them people is gone. Why, Tom, we're the people that live. They ain't gonna wipe us out. Why, we're the people--we go on."

"We take a beatin' all the time."

"I know." Ma chuckled. "Maybe that makes us tough. Rich fellas come up an' they die, an' their kids ain't no good, an' they die out. But, Tom, we keep a-comin'."⁵²

Just before Casey is killed he tells Tom the same thing--as long as you take a step forward, it does not matter if it slips back a

fraction:

"'Anyways, you do what you can. An' . . . the on'y thing you got to look at is that ever' time they's a little step forward, she may slip back a little, but she never slips clear back. You can prove that . . . an' that makes the whole thing right. An' that means they wasn't no waste even if it seemed like they was.'"53

This philosophy of man's slow but sure movement in a definite direction is also implied in the turtle image. After the description of the turtle conquering the highway embankment, Steinbeck ends the chapter with, "His yellow toe nails slipped a fraction in the dust."54 Steinbeck, again using imagery which echoes the turtle, explicitly states his optimistic belief in man's movement in Chapter Fourteen:

This you may say of man--when theories change and crash, when schools, philosophies, when narrow dark alleys of thought, national, religious, economic, grow and disintegrate, man reaches, stumbles forward, painfully, mistakenly sometimes. Having stepped forward, he may slip back, but only half a step, never the full step back. This you may say and know it and know it. This you may know when the bombs plummet out of the black planes on the market place, when prisoners are stuck like pigs, when the crushed bodies drain filthily in the dust. You may know it in this way. If the step were not being taken, if the stumbling-forward ache were not alive, the bombs would not fall, the throats would not be cut. Fear the time when the bombs stop falling while the bombers live--for every bomb is proof that the spirit has not died. And fear the time when the strikes stop while the great owners live--for every little beaten strike is proof that the step is being taken. And this you can know--fear the time when Manself will not suffer and die for a concept, for this one quality is the foundation of Manself, and this one quality is man, distinctive in the universe.55

The turtle risks death in crossing the highway in order to crawl southwest. Casey risks death and dies for his concept of unity and revolution. Finally, in the end after sitting in the wilderness and thinking as Casey had, Tom becomes Casey's disciple and is going to continue to move in the direction Casey moved. Like the turtle Tom now has some idea of where he is going. Thus, the image of the turtle

points to Tom's development as Casey's disciple by reflecting the philosophy he commits himself to--"It contains implicitly, in 'chordal collapse,' a destiny that the narrative will unfold explicitly, in 'arpeggio'."⁵⁶

Thus far I have dealt with the turtle's relation to individual characters in the novel--Casey, Rose of Sharon, Granma, Ma and Tom. Just as the leaf image in In Dubious Battle led into other patterns of imagery, so does the turtle. Images of imprisonment and of breaking or going "stir-nuts"⁵⁷ are linked to the turtle and play an important role throughout The Grapes of Wrath.

As has been suggested, the burning hot highway which the turtle crosses may be paralleled to the desert which the Joads and thousands of other migrants cross in order to reach California. However, once the turtle has crossed the highway, it does not reach a promised land of milk and honey--in fact it is captured by Tom Joad. The same fate awaits the migrants in California. As Tom says, "this ain't no lan' of milk an' honey like the preachers say."⁵⁸ California becomes the migrants prison. This imprisonment of the Okies is compared to Tom's and the turtle's imprisonment. In the face of their adversity and imprisonment, the migrants can do one of two things--persist in spite of the overwhelming odds (like the turtle which, as the embankment grows steeper and steeper, becomes more and more frantic in its efforts) or break like Hooligan, the lamp bug and the piece of baling wire. These three images are expanded explorations on the struggle of the migrants to keep moving like the turtle, to keep trying to escape from their imprisonment and not become 'stir-nuts.'

The image of the lamp bug illustrates in "chordal collapse" the fate of the men who are broken during their trek to the promised

land. After Tom and Casey repair the Wilson's car they drive to the camp where the rest of the family is staying. Tom becomes angry when the proprietor tells him that he has to pay to stay in the camp (even though his family has already paid) and that if he sleeps in the ditch he will be picked up as a vagrant. As Tom's anger rises, the men who had been discussing the trip to California, grow quiet and watch:

The circle of men were quiet, sitting on the steps, leaning on the high porch. Their eyes glittered under the harsh light of the gas lantern. Their faces were hard in the hard light, and they were very still. Only their eyes moved from speaker to speaker, and their faces were expressionless and quiet. A lamp bug slammed into the lantern and broke itself, and fell into the darkness.⁵⁹

This image of the lamp-bug slamming into the light, breaking and falling into darkness is a very effective prophetic image. When it is examined within different contexts it takes on more and more significance. In the context of the quarrel between Tom and the owner of the camp it reflects Tom's struggle and the danger of his becoming another Purty Boy Floyd, of breaking himself on hopeless anger and hate. Right after the quarrel between Tom and the camp owner a "ragged man"⁶⁰ tells of his experience in California. His wife and children died of starvation, he could not even make enough money to eat. He is now on his way back because he would rather "starve all over at oncet!"⁶¹ He tries to make the circle of men believe him, but they cannot believe him. Then he realizes that anything he says will not stop them from going to California:

"You gonna go on. You ain't goin' back." The silence hung on the porch. And the light hissed, and a halo of moths swung around and around the lantern."⁶²

Finally, the ragged man walks away:

The ragged man looked around at the circle, and then he turned and walked quickly away into the darkness. The dark swallowed him, but his dragging footsteps could be heard a long time after he had gone, footsteps along the road; and a car came by on the highway, and its lights showed the ragged man shuffling along the road, his head hanging down and his hands in the black coat pockets.⁶³

The ragged man is like the bug that has slammed itself into the light and is now falling into the darkness, a broken man with no wife, family or possessions. The men in the circle who will push on to California no matter what they are told are like the "halo of moths" that swing around and around the lantern--or, to be more accurate they are flying toward the hissing light, California, and will soon be breaking themselves flying around and around this "promised land." These images also explain why the men must push on to this light burning in the darkness. The hoards of migrant workers are attracted to California just as flies and bugs are attracted to a lamp in the night. A few pages after the ragged man incident the migrant people are described as bugs: "In the daylight they scuttled like bugs to the westward; and as the dark caught them, they clustered like bugs near to shelter and to water."⁶⁴ California, the promised land, the objective for which man strives, may, ironically, destroy him in his attempts to reach it. The lamp becomes his prison instead of his promised land. This is what has happened to the Okies, and Casey, the prophet, is trying to save the people from breaking themselves in this prison. He has been listening to people talking and he has been thinking:

"Listen all the time. That's why I been thinkin'. Listen to people a-talkin', an' purty soon I hear the way folks are feelin'. Goin' on all the time. I hear 'em an' feel 'em; an' they're beating their wings like a bird in a attic. Gonna bust their wings on a dusty winda tryin' ta get out."⁶⁵

The migrant workers, once they get to California, have no sense of direction. Like the moths they fly around and around in circles going nowhere and breaking themselves. As Burke writes in a footnote, the images of movement in the last part of the book lack direction:

The imagery of the trek in The Grapes of Wrath has an interesting effect, from the functional point of view. Thus, I heard a critic say that the book "had movement" up to the point where the Joads reach California, but from that time on, it wandered, "lacked movement." It occurred to me that the observation applied in the most literal sense: until they reached California, the Joads were moving in a definite direction; after they arrive, their destination becomes as vague as the land turtle's.⁶⁶

Again, I disagree with Burke's suggestion that the turtle's destination is vague--at least its direction is definite. However, once the Joads reach California they do lack direction. The migrant families in their Californian prison move as Tom did in prison, "in cell an' out cell an' in mess an' out mess."⁶⁷

On the way to the Hooper Ranch to pick peaches, Tom tells what happened to Hooligan, a cellmate at McAlister. Tom's story of Hooligan draws together the analogy between the Okies' plight and prison life, the persistence of the turtle and the danger of becoming "stir-nuts" and breaking:

"This fella was always gonna break out. Make a plan, he would; but he couldn' keep it to hisself an' purty soon ever'body knowed it, even the warden. He'd make his break an' they'd take 'im by the han' an' lead 'im back. Well, one time he drawed a plan where he's goin' over. 'Course he showed it aroun', an' ever'body kep' still. An' he hid out, an' ever'-body kep' still. So he's got himself a rope somewheres, an' he goes over the wall. They's six guards outside with a great big sack, an' Hooligan comes quiet down the rope an' they jus' hol' the sack out an' he goes right inside. They tie up the mouth an' take 'im back inside. Fellas laughed so hard they like to died. But it busted Hooligan's spirit. He jus' cried an' cried, an' moped aroun' an' got sick. Hurt his feelin's so bad. Cut his wrists with a pin an' bled to death 'cause his feelin's was hurt. No harm in 'im at all. They's all kinds a screwballs in stir."⁶⁸

Hooligan is like the turtle at first in his persistent attempts to escape. On his last attempt, however, he is recaptured in the same way Tom captures the the turtle--in a sack, and he is broken because of his loss of dignity.⁶⁹ Hooligan despairs and commits suicide whereas the turtle persists.

The story of Hooligan is significantly told as the Joad family travels toward the Hooper Ranch, for the prison imagery and the danger of breaking reach a climax in this section of the novel. Many of the work camps in California were like prisons and the story of Hooligan serves as an introduction to the prison camp at Hooper's Ranch and also as a link between Tom's descriptions of prison life at McAlister and the prison life in California. Steinbeck deliberately contrasts the government camp, which the Joads have just left, to the workers' camp at Hooper Ranches. There are no showers, toilets, laundry rooms or hot water here. Ma is not greeted by a welcoming committee like the one in the government camp--they are "welcomed" by a policeman, escorted by "four cops"⁷⁰ through a "high wire gate."⁷¹ Inside the gate they are told by two men with shotguns to keep going. They turn a bend and reach the peach camp:

There were fifty little square, flat-roofed boxes, each with a door and a window, and the whole group in a square. A water tank stood high on one edge of the camp. And a little grocery store stood on the other side. At the end of each row of square houses stood two men armed with shotguns and wearing big silver stars pinned to their shirts.⁷²

They are assigned a house (really a cell "with a door and a window"⁷³) and when they arrive at the house two deputies approach and make sure that the Joads are not on their black list. This camp is really a prison. There is barbed wire all around it, and later, when Tom tries

to walk out of the camp to find out what was going on at the gate, he is stopped by a guard and told that he cannot leave the camp (Tom's desire to find out what was going on outside the gate is one of the indications that he is not satisfied with simply putting one foot ahead of the other. Like Casey he wants to look further ahead).

The prison-like atmosphere of the camp begins to work on the members of the Joad family: "The men unloaded the truck silently. A fear had fallen on them. The great square of baxes was silent."⁷⁴ The camp depresses Ruthie and Winfield and they silently stay by the family:

The pall had fallen on Ruthie and Winfield. They did not dash away to inspect the place. They stayed close to the truck, close to the family. They looked forlornly up and down the dusty street. Winfield found a piece of baling wire and he bent it back and forth until it broke. He made a little crank of the shortest piece and turned it around and around in his hands.⁷⁵

Here again Steinbeck uses an image which is a collapsed chord implicitly containing a number of expanded arpeggios. The image of Winfield with the baling wire is similar to that of Jim and the leaf and Tom and the turtle. This chord carries within it the theme expressed in the whole novel as well as reflecting the danger of the individual breaking in the face of overwhelming odds. Like the lamp bug breaking itself on the lantern, Winfield's wearying the baling wire until it breaks and then making a crank from one of the pieces and turning it in his hands implicitly suggest Winfield's struggle, the family's struggle, the migrant workers' struggle and finally the human race's struggle in their respective prison camps or arenas of existence. This description of Winfield also implicitly carries the theme of unity which is illustrated throughout the novel--unity which will protect man as the

turtle's shell protects the soft and vulnerable body inside.

As the novel proceeds Ma becomes more and more worried about her family. She is afraid that it is breaking up and she continually strives to hold it together. The family has a much greater chance of surviving than the individual. The individual cannot survive alone the crushing forces of existence. But a family might, the migrant workers as a large family will survive and keep on going, the human race will always go on. Tom commits himself as Casey had done to belief in unity. Just before he leaves Ma he quotes some scripture Casey had read him:

"'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lif' up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up' 'Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.'"⁷⁶

Winfield has one chance for survival. To prevent himself from being wearied and broken, bent into a crank and turned around and around, he must stick close to the family unit. The ragged man broke easily after he had lost his family for he had no one to turn to. In the prison-like camp Winfield and Ruthie instinctively stay close to the truck and the family. However, even the family unit seems unable to withstand the destructive forces in California. The Joad family is slowly broken up and destroyed but even as it is being destroyed it is being replaced by a new family, a larger unit which will be more effective in combating the grasping individuals and large companies which non-compassionately treat humans as counters in a game of profit and loss. The Joad family might not live to

see this new family, but out of their pain and anger it will grow. Casey dies trying to help form this unit and Tom picks up where Casey left off. The more the Okies are oppressed by the deputies and vigilantes, the closer knit they become and the harder their shell of mutual aid grows.⁷⁷ In Winfield's and Ruthie's generation this shell may be completed. Winfield is linked to the turtle for Tom was bringing it home for him--this implies that Winfield will carry on where Tom left off. The baling wire image and the lamp bug image sound the minor collapsed chord of the novel, minor because it is overwhelmed by the major chord (the turtle) and because it represents the dangers of existence. It is really, however, inherent in the turtle image for the turtle's toe nails slip back a fraction each step. The implication is that in man's struggle the danger of breaking is always present, but the united "Manself" will always move forward like the turtle in spite of small setbacks.

Thus far I have discussed the turtle in relation to individual characters, other image patterns, and theme. The turtle image proliferates into many other areas. The whole Joad family, as suggested earlier, becomes the turtle. Their truck as they travel southwest looks like the land turtle with its "high-domed shell."⁷⁸ The Joad's protective shell in this case is their household utensils piled high in the back of the truck. Ruthie and Winfield and Rose of Sharon's unborn child are the oat seeds, "the sleeping life waiting to be spread and dispersed"⁷⁹ across the desert in California. Each individual, each family, each group of families, the whole migration of displaced Okies and, finally, the whole human race is symbolized by the turtle. The turtle becomes the persistent life

drive, life which continually moves forward fertilizing itself and nourishing itself. The turtle becomes a reflection for both life and death, moving forward and slipping back--it kills the red ant and plants the oat seeds (the unity of birth and death is implied a number of times in the novel--Connie and Rose of Sharon making love while Granma dies, Ruthie finding the reptile eggs just as the Joad's dog is killed on the highway, and possibly, the birth of Rose of Sharon's stillborn child).

The turtle becomes as versatile and complex a symbol as the Chinese Yin and Yang, the black and white circle⁸⁰ which represents the ten thousand things of the universe, birth and death, creation and destruction. The most significant implication in the turtle image, however, is the will to live. The turtle as a symbol for the life drive is fitting on the realistic level and on the mythic level. In Hindu philosophy the earth rests on the backs of four elephants which stand on the back of a turtle. In a myth of creation the world was created from a grain of sand brought up from the bottom of chaos's waters by a turtle. The turtle is sacred in many religions (in Chinese religious belief it is revered for its benevolence and wisdom⁸¹). The turtle is especially well known in myth, literature and folklore for its longevity--one turtle is supposedly capable of living 500 years. Here, however, myth begins to merge into reality. The turtle is capable of living a long time--it outlives all other vertebrates including man. One turtle is known to have lived at least 152 years (accidental death overtook it in 1918⁸²). Because Steinbeck is an avid amateur biologist his use of the turtle as a symbol is both biological or realistic and mythic. Land turtles actually do migrate.

Grant reports such a migration in Texas:

On August 3, 1938 . . . an apparent migration of this species was observed. Sixteen of these tortoises were counted on the road alone in a distance of 2 or 3 miles, and at least as many more were observed in the sandy, brushy country beside the road.⁸³

Steinbeck could not have found a better biological symbol to represent the persistence of life. The turtle has been here 175,000,000 years-- it watched the coal forests wither, the rise and fall of the archosaurs, the beginning of birds, the rise and fall of the dinosaurs. The turtles then

watched again as the mammals rose to heights of evolutionary frenzy reminiscent of the dinosaurs in their day, and swept across the grasslands in an endless cavalcade of restless, warm-blooded types. Turtles went with them, as tortoises now, with high shells and columnar, elephantine feet, but always making as few compromises as possible with the new environment, for by now their architecture and their philosophy had been proved by the eons; and there is no wonder that they just kept on watching as Eohippus begat Man o' War and a mob of irresponsible and shifty-eyed little shrews swarmed down out of the trees to chip at stones, and fidget around fires, and build atom bombs.⁸⁴

PART TWO

THE PROPHETIC 'SYSTEM'

He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sun rise.¹³²

"Eternity", William Blake

CHAPTER III

THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE IN THE NOVELS OF JOHN STEINBECK

Up to this point I have explored the main technique employed by Steinbeck to create the prophetic novel--the prophetic image. The essence of the prophetic image was found to be its ability to expand, to proliferate into the whole novel in such a way that it becomes the whole novel. Steinbeck's philosophy is reflected in the structure of his novels (that is, the structure created by the prophetic image). The key to both philosophy and structure is unity through relation. Steinbeck supports his philosophy from two points of view--that of the biologist (scientific) and that of the artist (visionary). Carpenter describes the thought behind The Grapes of Wrath as mystical, poetic and pragmatic:

For the first time in history, The Grapes of Wrath brings together and makes real three great skeins of American thought. It begins with the transcendental oversoul, Emerson's faith in the common man, and his Protestant self-reliance. To this it joins Whitman's religion of the love of all men and his mass democracy. And it combines these mystical and poetic ideas with the realistic philosophy of pragmatism and its emphasis on effective action. From this it develops a new kind of Christianity--not otherworldly and passive, but earthly and active.¹

Thus Steinbeck may be tagged a scientific visionary or a mystically poetic pragmatist. His philosophy is an attempt to encompass all approaches to reality--the scientific and the religious, the objective and the subjective, the intellectual and the intuitive. Steinbeck calls his approach "non-teleological or 'is' thinking,"² a method of

perception which goes beyond cause and effect explanations or any other partial approach.

In Sea of Cortez Steinbeck attempts to state explicitly the non-teleological philosophy implied in his novels. The Sea of Cortez was the result of a biological trip into the Gulf of California (once called the Sea of Cortez). Steinbeck and Ricketts outfitted a small boat, the "Western Flyer", and for six weeks (March 11 to April 20, 1940) collected specimens along the shore of the Gulf. Steinbeck describes the design of the book and the purpose of the trip as follows:

We have a book to write about the Gulf of California. We could do one of several things about its design. But we have decided to let it form itself: its boundaries a boat and a sea; its duration a six weeks' charter time; its subject everything we could see and think and even imagine; it limits--our own without reservation.

We made a trip into the Gulf; sometimes we dignified it by calling it an expedition We stopped in many little harbors and near barren coasts to collect and preserve the marine invertebrates of the littoral. One of the reasons we gave ourselves for this trip--and when we used this reason, we called the trip an expedition--was to observe the distribution of invertebrates, to see and to record their kinds and numbers, how they lived together, what they ate, and how they reproduced. That plan was simple, straight-forward, and only a part of the truth. But we did tell the truth to ourselves. We were curious. Our curiosity was not limited, but was as wide and horizonless as that of Darwin or Agassiz or Linnaeus or Pliny. We wanted to see everything our eyes would accommodate, to think what we could, and, out of our seeing and thinking, to build some kind of structure in modeled imitation of the observed reality.³

The Sea of Cortez is much more than a diary of a biological expedition.

In letters Steinbeck wrote that Sea of Cortez "is a good clearing-out of a lot of ideas that have been working on me for a long time"⁴ and that it is "the careful statement of the thesis of work to be done in the future."⁵ I will attempt to outline briefly Steinbeck's thesis of the non-teleological approach and the nature of the non-teleological universe it unfolds.

First, the nature of the universe as seen through non-teleological or prophetic perception. Throughout the Sea of Cortez Steinbeck stresses the idea that "all things are one thing and that one thing is all things."⁶ All of the particulars of existence are inextricably bound up to the whole through relation so that there is really no such thing as a "closed system":

Everything impinges on everything else, often into radically different systems, although in such cases faintly. We doubt very much if there are any truly "closed systems." Those so called represent kingdoms of a great continuity bounded by the sudden discontinuity of great synapses which eventually must be bridged in any unified-field hypothesis. For instance, the ocean, with reference to waves of water, might be considered as a closed system. But anyone who has lived in Pacific Grove or Carmel during the winter storms will have felt the house tremble at the impact of waves half a mile or more away impinging on a totally different "closed" system.⁷

Thus each particular and each group or system of particulars is closely woven together into the fabric of the whole of existence. Steinbeck says that the relationships between animal and animal, species and species, group and group and finally life and non-life merge into the whole and that religious feeling is a result of man's perceiving his relation to the whole of reality:

Our own interest lay in relationships of animal to animal. If one observes in this relational sense, it seems apparent that species are only commas in a sentence, that each species is at once the point and the base of a pyramid, that all life is relational to the point where an Einsteinian relativity seems to emerge. And then not only the meaning but the feeling about species grows misty. One emerges into another, groups melt into ecological groups until the time when what we know as life meets and enters what we think of as non-life: barnacle and rock, rock and earth, earth and tree, tree and rain and air. And the units nestle into the whole and are inseparable from it. Then one can come back to the microscope and the tide pool and the aquarium. But the little animals are found to be changed, no longer set apart and alone. And it is a strange thing that most of the feeling we call religious, most of the mystical out-crying which is one of the most prized and used and desired reactions of our species, is really the understanding and the attempt to say that man is related

to the whole thing, related inextricably to all reality, known and unknowable. This is a simple thing to say, but the profound feeling of it made a Jesus, a St. Augustine, a St. Francis, a Roger Bacon, a Charles Darwin, and an Einstein. Each of them in his own tempo and with his own voice discovered and reaffirmed with astonishment the knowledge that all things are one thing and that one thing is all things--plankton, a shimmering phosphorescence on the sea and the spinning planets and an expanding universe, all bound together by the elastic string of time. It is advisable to look from the tide pool to the stars and then back to the tide pool again.⁸

In effect each particular of existence becomes, through relation, a microcosm of the macrocosmic whole--each particular is an index to the whole: "in life, which is a unified field of reality, everything is an index of everything else."⁹ Steinbeck says that even the trip itself is a part of this whole and that they could feel the nature of the macrocosm through its relation to their microcosmic journey:

This little trip of ours was becoming a thing and a dual thing, with collecting and eating and sleeping merging with the thinking-speculating activity. Quality of sunlight, blueness and smoothness of water, boat engines, and ourselves were all parts of a larger whole and we could begin to feel its nature but not its size.¹⁰

Earlier in the book he describes the feeling of being related to the whole and emphasizes that this reality includes everything, good and bad, even the mangrove with its "foul odor"¹¹ and atmosphere of "stealthy murder"¹²:

It was a good rich collecting day, and it had been a curiously emotional day beginning with the church. Sometimes one has a feeling of fullness, of warm wholeness, wherein every sight and object and odor and experience seems to key into a gigantic whole. That day even the mangrove was part of it. Perhaps among primitive peoples the human sacrifice has the same effect of creating a wholeness of sense and emotion--the good and bad, beautiful, ugly, and cruel all welded into one thing. Perhaps a whole man needs this balance.¹³

The belief that everything is related to the whole and is a microcosm of this whole inevitably leads to the Blakean concept that

every particular is significant, is infinite and eternal: "every thing exists & not one sight nor smile nor tear,/One hair nor particle of dust, not one can pass away."¹⁴ Steinbeck asserts the significance of every particular through a relativistic theory encompassed by an absolutist conviction, "none of it is important or all of it is":

"Let us go," we said, "into the Sea of Cortez, realizing that we become forever a part of it; that our rubber boots slogging through a flat of eelgrass, that the rocks we turn over in a tide pool, make us truly and permanently a factor in the ecology of the region. We shall take something away from it, but we shall leave something too." And if we seem a small factor in a huge pattern, nevertheless it is of relative importance. We take a tiny colony of soft corals from a rock in a little water world. And that isn't terribly important to the tide pool. Fifty miles away the Japanese shrimp boats are dredging with overlapping scoops, bringing up tons of shrimps, rapidly destroying the ecological balance of the whole region. That isn't very important in the world. And thousands of miles away the great bombs are falling and the stars are not moved thereby. None of it is important or all of it is.¹⁵

In life, "a unified field of reality,"¹⁶ everything is significant.

Nothing is wasted or passes away. In The Book of Thel, Thel (the embryo which has not yet entered the world of experience) is told that "'Every thing that lives /'Lives not alone nor for itself.'"¹⁷

The lily, the cloud, the worm and Thel herself are integral parts of the whole, of divine Life. Even the clod of clay is loved and kissed by the divine being. In Sea of Cortez Steinbeck argues the significance of all things from the biological point of view--nothing is wasted by the great organism, Life. When Tiny, one of the two seamen on the "Western Flyer", condemns the Japanese shrimp boat for the tremendous waste of fish from their dredging techniques, Steinbeck argues that nothing is wasted for Life "takes it all and uses it all":

To Tiny the fisherman, having as his function not only the catching of fish but the presumption that they would be eaten by humans, the Japanese were wasteful. And in that picture he was very correct. But all the fish actually were eaten; if any small parts were missed by the birds they were taken by the detritus-eaters, the worms and cucumbers. And what they missed was reduced by the bacteria. What was the fisherman's loss was a gain to another group. We tried to say that in the macrocosm nothing is wasted, the equation always balances. The elements which the fish elaborated into an individuated physical organism, a microcosm, go back again into the undifferentiated macrocosm which is the great reservoir. There is not, nor can there be, any actual waste, but simply varying forms of energy. To each group, of course, there must be waste--the dead fish to man, the broken pieces to gulls, the bones to some and the scales to others--but to the whole, there is no waste. The great organism, Life, takes it all and uses it all. The large picture is always clear and the smaller can be clear--the picture of eater and eaten. And the large equilibrium of the life of a given animal is postulated on the presence of abundant larvae of just such forms as itself for food. Nothing is wasted; "no star is lost."

And in a sense there is no over-production, since every living thing has its niche, a posteriori, and God, in a real, non-mystical sense, sees every sparrow fall and every cell utilized.¹⁸

The non-teleological universe necessarily includes everything that exists for it is the infinite whole:

The whole is necessarily everything, the whole world of fact and fancy, body and psyche, physical fact and spiritual truth, individual and collective, life and death, macrocosm and microcosm (the greatest quanta here, the greatest synapse between these two), conscious and unconscious, subject and object. The whole picture is portrayed by is, the deepest word of deep ultimate reality, not shallow or partial as reasons are, but deeper and participating, possibly encompassing the Oriental concept of being.¹⁹

Thus, even erroneous beliefs are real things and are a part of the non-teleological universe. They must "be considered proportional to their spread or intensity"²⁰ since "'All-truth' must embrace all extant apropos errors . . . and know them as such by relation to the whole, and allow for their effects."²¹ And since everything is an index of the whole reality, erroneous beliefs as well as true beliefs, insanity as well as sanity, indicate this reality.

This, then, is the nature of the non-teleological universe--

it necessarily includes everything, each particular is significant for through relation to the whole each particular becomes the whole ("everything is one thing and . . . one thing is everything"²²). In order to see this world the individual must have Blake's four-fold vision, or the Zen Buddhist's satori. Four-fold vision and satori, if not the same are very similar to Steinbeck's non-teleological thought. All three are expanded states of awareness. Most individuals, however, are subject to a fallen or contracted vision, what Blake calls one-fold vision or Steinbeck teleological thought. In The First Book of Urizen Blake describes the fall of man as a contracting or shrinking of his perceptions:

The Senses inward rush'd, shrinking
Beneath the dark net of infection;

2. Till the shrunken eyes, clouded over,
Discern'd not the woven hypocrisy;
But the streaky slime in their heavens,
Brought together by narrowing perceptions,
Appear'd transparent air; for their eyes
Grew small like the eyes of a man,
And in reptile forms shrinking together,
Of seven feet stature they remain'd.

3. Six days they shrunk up from existence,
And on the seventh day they rested,
And they blessed the seventh day, in sick hope,
And forgot their eternal life.²³

Most men are "bound down/To earth by their narrowing perceptions."²⁴

The individual with partial vision can only perceive a partial or distorted world--in order to perceive the whole, the perceptions must be whole. Blake says, "The Sun's Light when he unfolds it /Depends on the Organ that beholds it"²⁵ and "Perceptive Organs closed, their Objects close."²⁶ Steinbeck's "dry-ball" scientists are victims of this narrowing of the perceptions and "out of their own crusted

minds they create a world wrinkled with formaldehyde."²⁷ He wonders if it is weariness which causes so many men of science to retire into easy didacticism--the narrowing of the perceptions, the "stultification of the attention centres"²⁸ shrinks them into a "shell of didacticism."²⁹ The world they create is partial and distorted since it depends on their perceptions: "The reports of biologists are the measure, not of the science, but of the men themselves."³⁰ Both Blake and Steinbeck believe that the completeness and truth of the perceived depends on the wholeness of the perceiver.

Steinbeck's distinction between the "dry-ball" biologists and the true biologist may be compared to that between Urizen and Los. Urizen is the contracted being who attempts to limit the universe with abstracting circles and triangles. He is like the "dry-ball" biologists, "the embalmers of the field, the picklers who see only the preserved form of life without any of its principle."³¹ Urizen and the "dry-ball" biologist limit themselves to a contracted approach to reality. Urizen and the "dry-ball" kill what is by making abstractions:

They take the Two Contraries which are call'd Qualities, with which
Every Substance is clothed: they name them Good & Evil
From them they make an Abstract, which is a Negation
Not only of the Substance from which it is derived,
A murderer of its own Body, but also a murderer
Of every Divine Member: it is the Reasoning Power,
An Abstract objecting power, that Negatives every thing.
This is the Spectre of Man, the Holy Reasoning Power
And in its Holiness is closed the Abomination of Desolation.

Los represents the ever-expanding human imagination. He attempts to reinstate the Cosmic Man (which Urizen caused to be divided) and four-fold-vision. One-fold perception is caused by Urizen's domination of the Eternal Man. In Steinbeck's discussion, Urizen becomes the

teleological approach and Los becomes the non-teleological approach. Just as Los desires an all-encompassing mode of perception (one which includes, not destroys, Urizen) the non-teleological approach includes the teleological. However, Los and non-teleological thinking attempt to go beyond any partial modes of vision. In the introduction to Sea of Cortez Steinbeck indicates that he and Ricketts were attempting the non-teleological approach on their trip--their real motive for going is curiosity, "wide and horizonless"³³ curiosity. Steinbeck contrasts the Los approach (unlimited) with the Urizen approach (limited), using the example of recording the reality of the Mexican sierra:

the Mexican sierra has "XVII--15--IX" spines in the dorsal fin. These can easily be counted. But if the sierra strikes hard on the line so that our hands are burned, if the fish sounds and nearly escapes and finally comes in over the rail, his colors pulsing and his tail beating the air, a whole new relational externality has come into being--an entity which is more than the sum of the fish plus the fisherman. The only way to count the spines of the sierra unaffected by this second relational reality is to sit in a laboratory, open an evil-smelling jar, remove a stiff colorless fish from formalin solution, count the spines, and write the truth "D. XVII--15--IX." There you have recorded a reality which cannot be assailed--probably the least important reality concerning either the fish or yourself.

It is good to know what you are doing. The man with his pickled fish has set down one truth and has recorded in his experience many lies. The fish is not that color, that texture, that dead, nor does he smell that way.

Such things we had considered in the months of planning our expedition and we were determined not to let a passion for unassailable little truths draw in the horizons and crowd the sky down on us

We determined to go doubly open so that in the end we could, if we wished, describe the sierra thus: "D. XVII--15--IX; A. II--15--IX," but also we could see the fish alive and swimming, feel it plunge against the line, drag it threshing over the rail, and even finally eat it. And there is no reason why either approach should be inaccurate. Spine-count description need not suffer because another approach is also used. Perhaps out of the two approaches, we thought, there might emerge a picture more complete and even more accurate than either alone could produce. And so we went.³⁴

Here the Urizenic abstracting process, which kills what is by negating what is, is contrasted with the unlimited or expanded approach which

continually attempts to proliferate in all directions. The true biologist, like Los, proliferates in all directions, uses the non-teleological approach. The four-fold vision and non-teleological approaches include Urizenic and teleological approaches.

When the Urizenic approach or the teleological approach dominates and restricts the viewer's perceptions, the reality perceived is restricted and distorted. Steinbeck says that this narrowing results from the "emotional content" of a teleology and from the apparent conflicting of two or more answers brought forth by teleologies:

But the greatest fallacy in, or rather the greatest objection to, teleological thinking is in connection with the emotional content, the belief. People get to believing and even to professing the apparent answers thus arrived at, suffering mental constriction by emotionally closing their minds to any of the further and possibly opposite "answers" which might otherwise be unearthed by honest effort--answers which, if faced realistically, would give rise to a struggle and to a possible rebirth which might place the whole problem in a new and more significant light

Significant in this connection is the fact that conflicts may arise between any two or more of the "answers" brought forth by either of the teleologies, or the two teleologies themselves. But there can be no conflict between any of these and the non-teleological picture.³⁵

If the individual forces his perceptions to expand, to proliferate in all directions, he will "see a World in a Grain of Sand /And a heaven in a Wild Flower"³⁶ for "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite."³⁷ The true biologist is like Thoreau who meets the servant of the Bramin at his well and who sees that "the pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges."³⁸ Throughout Sea of Cortez Steinbeck uses the image of the tide pool as a microcosm of the macrocosm. The tide pool becomes Thoreau's Walden Pond or Blake's grain of sand which, through non-teleological thinking or four-fold vision become infinite

and eternal--time and space are annihilated:

a man looking at reality brings his own limitations to the world. If he has strength and energy of mind the tide pool stretches both ways, digs back to electrons and leaps space into the universe and fights out of the moment into non-conceptual time. Then ecology has a synonym which is ALL.³⁹

It is advisable to look from the tide pool to the stars and then back to the tide pool again.⁴⁰

The key to non-teleological thinking is the ability to look at a thing as it is. When one looks at reality from the point of view of the cause and effect teleology or the good and bad teleology there is an instant distortion of what actually is. Steinbeck says that the statement, "it's so because it's so" is the most significant and all encompassing statement about anything:

Understandings of this sort can be reduced to this deep and significant summary: "It's so because it's so." But exactly the same words can also express the hasty or superficial attitude. There seems to be no explicit method for differentiating the deep and participating understanding, the "all-truth" which admits infinite change or expansion as added relations become apparent, from the shallow dismissal and implied lack of further interest which may be couched in the very same words.⁴¹

This does not mean that the non-teleological approach is detached and cruel. Steinbeck says that "non-teleological methods more than any other seem capable of great tenderness, of an all-embracingness which is rare otherwise"⁴² and "with the non-teleological treatment there is only the love and understanding of instant acceptance."⁴³

Thus, non-teleological thinking attempts to grasp the whole situation which ultimately means saying that a thing is because it is. This means going beyond thought as well:

The truest reason for anything's being so is that it is. This is actually and truly a reason, more valid and clearer than all the other

separate reasons, or than any group of them short of the whole. Anything less than the whole forms part of the picture only, and the infinite whole is unknowable except by being it, by living into it.^{43a}

Non-teleological thinking is really a contradiction in terms, for this approach "extends beyond thinking even to living itself; in fact, by inferred definition it transcends the realm of thinking possibilities, it postulates 'living into.'"⁴⁴ "Living into" is what Steinbeck means when he describes the true biologist as one who makes "the first rule of life living," who "proliferates in all directions" and "having certain tendencies . . . must move along their lines to the limit of their potentialities."⁴⁵

Non-teleological thinking, then, is a mode of perception which goes beyond blame or cause, which goes beyond all partial approaches. The mind alone cannot encompass the infinite whole--"the infinite whole is unknowable except by being it, by living into it." In the non-teleological pattern causality

would be merely a name for something that exists only in our partial and biased mental reconstructings. The pattern which it indexes, however, would be real, but not intellectually apperceivable because the pattern goes everywhere and is everything and cannot be encompassed by finite mind or by anything short of life--which it is.⁴⁶

The non-teleological pattern which underlies everything, which is the whole, is not mystic in the sense of secret or hidden or occult:

The frequent allusions to an underlying pattern have no implication of mysticism--except inasmuch as a pattern which comprises infinity in factors and symbols might be called mystic. But infinity as here used occurs also in the mathematical aspects of physiology and physics both far away from mysticism as the term is ordinarily employed.⁴⁷

The underlying non-teleological pattern is inaccessible to intellectual explanation. After every assault by man there are residua which point

to this inaccessible pattern--inaccessible by any other means short of "living into" or possibly "the Oriental concept of being." Partial approaches are left with residua and open up more and deeper anomalies:

The psychic or spiritual residua remaining after the most careful physical analysis, or the physical remnants obvious, particularly to us of the twentieth century, in the most honest and disciplined spiritual speculations of medieval philosophers, all bespeak such a pattern. Those residua, those most minute differentials, the 0.001 percentages which suffice to maintain the races of sea animals, are seen finally to be the most important things in the world, not because of their sizes, but because they are everywhere. The differential is the true universal, the true catalyst, the cosmic solvent. Any investigation carried far enough will bring to light these residua, or rather will leave them still unassailable as Emerson remarked a hundred years ago in "The Oversoul"--will run into the brick wall of the impossibility of perfection while at the same time insisting on the validity of perfection. Anomalies especially testify to that framework; they are the commonest intellectual vehicles for breaking through; all are solvable in the sense that any one is understandable but that one leads with the power n to still more and deeper anomalies.

This deep underlying pattern inferred by non-teleological thinking crops up everywhere--a relational thing, surely, relating opposing factors on different levels, as reality and potential are related. But it must not be considered as causative, it simply exists, it is, things are merely expressions of it as it is expressions of them. And they are it, also. As Swinburne, extolling Hertha, the earth goddess, makes her say: "Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I," so all things which are that--which is all-equally may be extolled. That pattern materializes everywhere in the sense that Eddington finds the non-integer q "number" appearing everywhere, in the background of all fundamental equations, in the sense that the speed of light, constant despite compoundings or subtractions, seemed at one time almost to be conspiring against investigation.⁴⁸

What Steinbeck is saying here is neatly summed up by Blake's short poem "Mock on, Mock on":

Mock on, Mock on Voltaire, Rousseau:
Mock on, Mock on: 'tis all in vain!
You throw the sand against the wind,
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a Gem
Reflected in the beams divine;
Blown back they blind the mocking Eye,
But still in Israel's paths they shine.

The Atoms of Democritus
 And Newton's Particles of light
 Are sands upon the Red sea shore,
 Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.⁴⁹

Aldous Huxley and James Agee are two non-teleological thinkers whose description of the simple yet profound confrontation with what is may throw some light on Steinbeck's discussion. Huxley, in his essay "The Doors of Perception," describes his experience while under the influence of mescaline. When he looks at a flower arrangement he sees much more:

I was not looking now at an unusual flower arrangement. I was seeing what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation--the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence.⁵⁰

When asked by someone if what he sees is agreeable he answers, "neither agreeable nor disagreeable It just is."⁵¹ Huxley then goes on to qualify his answer:

Istigkeit--wasn't that the word Meister Eckhart liked to use? "Is-ness." The Being of Platonic philosophy--except that Plato seems to have made the enormous, the grotesque mistake of separating Being from becoming and identifying it with the mathematical abstraction of the Idea. He could never, poor fellow, have seen a bunch of flowers shining with their own inner light and all but quivering under the pressure of the significance with which they were charged; could never have perceived that what rose and iris and carnation so intensely signified was nothing more, and nothing less, than what they were--a transience that was yet eternal life, a perpetual perishing that was at the same time pure Being, a bundle of minute, unique particulars in which, by some unspeakable and yet self-evident paradox, was to be seen the divine source of all existence.⁵²

Huxley goes on to explain how his mind was no longer concerned with time and space: "The mind does its perceiving in terms of intensity of existence, profundity of significance, relationships within a pattern."⁵³ Huxley's experience with this drug may be considered

artificially induced four-fold vision or non-teleological perception.

Agee in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men describes the "open terms"⁵⁴ (very similar to Steinbeck's going "doubly open" into the Sea of Cortez) under which he is attempting "to capture and communicate this universe."⁵⁵ He claims that he is not dissecting his subject into science nor digesting it into art. He is attempting to capture the "cruel radiance of what is":

'For in the immediate world, everything is to be discerned, for him who can discern it, and centrally and simply, without either dissection into science, or digestion into art, but with the whole of consciousness, seeking to perceive it as it stands: so that the aspect of a street in sunlight can roar in the heart of itself as a symphony, perhaps as no symphony can: and all of consciousness is shifted from the imagined, the revisive, to the effort to perceive simply the cruel radiance of what is.'⁵⁶

Agee says that ultimately the most complete method of capturing "the cruel radiance of what is" would be a collection of the actual particulars--that is what is:

If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food and of excrement.⁵⁷

The last eight pages of Let Us Now Praise Famous Men describes the call of some unknown animal. It is probably the most detailed description of a seemingly insignificant particular written in the English language. In this passage Agee manages to stretch the capabilities of the written word to communicate "the cruel radiance of what is":

It was perhaps most nearly like the noise hydrogen makes when a match flame is passed across the mouth of a slanted test-tube. It was about the same height as this sound: soprano, with a strong alto illusion. It was colder than this sound, though: as cold and chilling as the pupil of a goat's eye, or a low note on the clarinet.⁵⁸

For eight pages Agee describes this sound and at least partially succeeds in making the reader see "what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation--the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence." The bird call, Huxley's flowers, Blake's grain of sand and Steinbeck's tide pool, through four-fold vision or non-teleological perception, explode into the infinite and the eternal. Agee claims that all of our casual experiences should point to this mystery: "It is this sort of mystery we should run against in all casual experience if we found ourselves without warning possessed of a new sense."⁵⁹ Under the influence of this profound awareness or visionary experience anguish and joy, all of the so-called opposites, become one and the same thing: "The essences of anguish and of joy are thus identical: They are the explosion or incandescence resulting from the incontrovertible perception of the incredible."⁶⁰

This, then, is the philosophical background behind Steinbeck's work. The major tenets, which are all inter-related, may be briefly listed as follows: "Everything that is is holy"⁶¹ (Agee's paraphrase of Blake's "Everything that lives is Holy"⁶²); through relation all things are one thing and one thing is all things; a thing is because it is; the non-teleological perceiver proliferates in all directions and the world he perceives becomes infinite and eternal; a man is potentially all things and he must admit to himself his "cosmic identity"⁶³ --through non-teleological perception "we might find ourselves true images of his [God's] kingdom, our eyes the nebulae, and the universe in our cells"⁶⁴; the non-teleological pattern underlies everything and is everything--thus so-called 'evil' particulars are just as much an index to reality as are 'good' particulars. Good and Evil are

abstractions from what is and are therefore distortions of what is.

It should be pointed out here that this "philosophy" which has been summarized in twenty pages is necessarily a distortion of what Steinbeck is trying to say. Steinbeck's philosophy is not really a philosophy--he is not attempting to formulate a system. The kind of philosophy he is trying to set down in Sea of Cortez has internal cohesion or system, but by its very nature it can never have a final or external cohesion or system. Because reality, as Steinbeck sees it, is an infinite everchanging flux of particulars and groups of particulars which have infinite permutations and combinations, the approach to this reality must also be infinite and flexible. It is impossible to bind reality down to one, limited approach. For Steinbeck the real sin in an individual is the inability to proliferate in all directions--the real sin is becoming encased in the hard shell of a dogma and denying the holiness and mystery of all existence. Thus, the safety-valve of all speculation is open-ness:

The safety-value of all speculation is: It might be so. And so long as that might remains, a variable deeply understood, then speculation does not easily become dogma, but remains the fluid creative thing it might be. Thus, a valid painter, letting color and line, observed, sift into his eyes, up the nerve trunks, and mix well with his experience before it flows down his hand to the canvas, has made his painting say, "It might be so." Perhaps his critic, being not so honest and not so wise, will say, "It is not so. The picture is damned." If the critic could say, "It is not so with me, but that might be because my mind and experience are not identical with those of the painter," that critic would be the better critic for it, just as that painter is a better painter for knowing he himself is in the pigment.

We tried always to understand that the reality we observed was partly us; the speculation our product. And yet if somehow, "The laws of thought must be the laws of things," one can find an index of reality even in insanity.⁶⁵

Steinbeck not only preaches this open-ended philosophy which admits of change, he practises it--in his own personal life and in his work. He continually attempts to see the total picture and he creates a novel form which is deliberately open-ended, which is fluid and never hardens into an external form cut off from the great infinite flux of life. He tries to create a microcosm which will imply the un-encompassable macrocosm. When Steinbeck was asked by Occident to write a political article on the migrant workers he refused, saying, "Generalities seem to solidify so quickly into stupidities. A writer can only honestly say--'this is the way it seems to me at this moment.'"⁶⁶ In his letter of refusal he says that he hopes "the projection of the microcosm will define the outlines of the macrocosm."⁶⁷

In his novels Steinbeck employs a number of methods to articulate his non-teleological philosophy. Some of the more explicit methods are: pure narrative comment (such as the inter-chapters of The Grapes of Wrath and East of Eden); prophet characters who are, to some extent at least, his spokesmen (Doc Burton in In Dubious Battle, Jim Casey in The Grapes of Wrath, Lee and Samuel Hamilton in East of Eden, Joseph Wayne in To a God Unknown and Ethan Allen Hawley in The Winter of Our Discontent); descriptions of characters suddenly achieving four-fold or non-teleological vision or of characters establishing a mutual relationship between themselves and the external universe. The implicit methods used are the prophetic image and the 'open-ended' structure which the prophetic image creates. These implicit methods are the most successful in communicating the reality Steinbeck wishes to express.

In Once There Was a War Steinbeck relates an experience during the war which carries the non-teleological view of the universe. A

lieutenant commander who believes that naval warfare is much like chamber music takes his friends to evensong at a monastery. After listening to the "disembodied and unimpassioned music"⁶⁸ the lieutenant (j.g.) worries about "some paradox"⁶⁹ and says, "The change from one thing to another was too quick. There was no time to get used to it. You should have time to get used to things like that."⁷⁰ The lieutenant commander, however, says that there was really no change at all and gives a non-teleological description of existence--there is no such thing as a "closed system" for everything is related:

"There was actually no change I've always thought that naval warfare was composed like chamber music. There wasn't any change. You just saw two sides of the same thing. You can't make islands of experiences. They relate just exactly as the strings relate in a quartet. Maybe you'll see in a day or two when we get into action. You haven't been in action, have you?"⁷¹

Ethan Allen Hawley in The Winter of Our Discontent is a very strange character. At first he is an honest, hard-working, not-too-successful grocery clerk who has the true biologist's ability to make the first rule of life living. He loves his family, he is well-liked by his friends and appears to be uncorruptible. But then a sudden change takes place and his character is transformed--he betrays his best friend, he plans to rob a bank, he betrays his boss, and finally, when he realizes what he has become, he nearly commits suicide. Both Granville Hicks⁷² and Joseph Fontenrose find Ethan Hawley and his story improbable. Fontenrose says that "Ethan Hawley, as Steinbeck delineates his character, would not suddenly turn to treachery and meanness"⁷³ and accuses Steinbeck of not probing "the social and economic reasons for the decay of moral standards."⁷⁴ Fontenrose says that Ethan's transformation cannot be accepted as "just something that

happened" for The Winter of Our Discontent "is not a non-teleological novel."⁷⁵ I believe that the enigma of Ethan's character is produced by Steinbeck's non-teleological philosophy. Ethan himself is a non-teleological thinker. Early in the novel he thinks to himself,

I guess we're all, or most of us, the wards of that nineteenth-century science which denied existence to anything it could not measure or explain. The things we couldn't explain went right on but surely not with our blessing. We did not see what we couldn't explain, and meanwhile a great part of the world was abandoned to children, insane people, fools and mystics, who were more interested in what is than in why it is.⁷⁶

He also articulates the Blakean concept of the relation between the perceiver and the perceived: "Bring new eyes to a world or even new lenses, and presto--new world."⁷⁷ But the non-teleological concept which makes Ethan's character transformation quite logical and acceptable is that man is potentially all things:

A man is potentially all things too, greedy and cruel, capable of great love or great hatred, of balanced or unbalanced so-called emotions. This is the way he is--one factor in a surge of striving.⁷⁸

Ethan, therefore, even though an honest and seemingly uncorruptible man, is potentially treacherous and capable of the destructive acts which Hicks and Fontenrose believe him incapable of. Steinbeck is dramatizing the Conradian concept that the malignant aspect of reality is latent in all of us, that the heart of darkness is within each of us. Gentleman Brown, the most evil character in Lord Jim, is a part of us and his massacre of the natives is "a demonstration of some obscure and awful attribute of our nature, which . . . is not so very far under the surface as we think."⁷⁹ This non-teleological 'reason' for Ethan's character change is stated by Ethan himself early in the

novel. In Chapter VI Ethan describes the sub-conscious with its archetypes inherited from the beginnings of life:

This secret and sleepless area in me I have always thought of as black, deep, waveless water, a spawning place from which only a few forms ever rise to the surface. Or maybe it's a great library where is recorded everything that has ever happened to living matter back to the first moment when it began to live.⁸⁰

Ethan goes on to say that some strange and hideous impulses push themselves up out of this area and he describes how, as he watched his brother-in-law die, he wanted to kill him:

Then, as I sat waiting by his bed, a monster swam up out of my dark water. I hated him. I wanted to kill him, to bite out his throat. My jaw muscles tightened and I think my lips fleered back like a wolf's at the kill.⁸¹

He tells Doc Peele how he felt and wonders what causes it for he liked his brother-in-law. The doctor tells him that it may be an old memory that goes back to the pack or even fish which "tear down and eat a weakened brother."⁸² When Ethan protests that he is not an animal or a fish, the doctor replies, "No, you're not. And perhaps that's why you find it foreign. But it's there. It's all there."⁸³ Steinbeck, therefore, is not interested in probing "the social and economic reasons for the decay of moral standards."⁸⁴ He is interested in dramatizing what is, in dramatizing the non-teleological universe which escapes or eludes the grasp of any limited approach (such as economic or social or political).

Another non-teleological manifestation in The Winter of Our Discontent is Ethan's talisman. This stone talisman is a microcosmic symbol of the non-teleological universe:

It was circular, four inches in diameter and an inch and half at its rounded peak. And carved on its surface was an endless interweaving shape that seemed to move and yet went no place. It was living but had no head or tail, nor beginning or end. The polished stone was not slick to the touch but slightly tacky like flesh, and it was always warm to the touch. You could see into it and yet not through it. I guess some old seaman of my blood had brought it back from China. It was magic--good to see, to touch, to rub against your cheek or to caress with your fingers. This strange and magic mound lived in the glass cabinet. As child and boy and man I was allowed to touch it, to handle it, but never to carry it away. And its colors and convolutions and texture changed as my needs changed. Once I supposed it was a breast, to me as a boy it became yoni, inflamed and aching. Perhaps later it evolved to brain or even enigma, the headless, endless, moving thing--the question which is whole within itself, needing no answer to destroy it, no beginning or end to limit it.⁸⁵

Over and under itself the carving went, and around and over and under, a serpent with neither head nor tail nor beginning nor ending.⁸⁶

The stone, "the question which is whole within itself, needing no answer to destroy it, no beginning or end to limit it" is the non-teleological universe in which Ethan is placed. And within this universe it is quite logical for Ethan's sudden character change to take place--it is quite natural that Hick's and Fontenrose's cause and effect teleology should find Ethan's character transformation unconvincing.

In East of Eden we are again in the non-teleological universe except Steinbeck is now especially concerned with the problem of good and evil. Using the Cain and Abel parable as man's microcosmic story, Steinbeck asserts that man, even though he contains the evil Cain within himself, has the choice and the ability to struggle against the evil side of his personality. At the end of the novel Caleb, who like Cain has caused his brother's death, is blessed by his dying father and is left with the choice. Although there is no concrete evidence in the novel that Caleb succeeds in his struggle, the tone of the ending is optimistic. Lee, the Chinese servant, becomes Steinbeck's mouthpiece (like Ethan's talisman Lee is significantly

Oriental--Steinbeck parallels non-teleological perception with the "Oriental concept of being"⁸⁷) and often utters such non-teleological tenets as,

"Maybe the knowledge is too great and maybe men are growing too small Maybe, kneeling down to atoms, they're becoming atom-sized in their souls. Maybe a specialist is only a coward, afraid to look out of his little cage. And think what any specialist misses--the whole world over his fence."⁸⁸

Adam Trask in East of Eden undergoes the four-fold visionary experience which Agee and Huxley describe. His perceptions become much more sensitive and the particulars he perceives become vivid and related:

Adam stood up and strode out of the room. He went to the back door and looked out on the afternoon. Far off in the field his brother was lifting stones from a sled and piling them on the stone wall. Adam looked up at the sky. A blanket of herring clouds was rolling in from the east. He sighed deeply and his breath made a tickling, exciting feeling in his chest. His ears seemed suddenly clear, so that he heard the chickens cackling and the east wind blowing over the ground. He heard horses' hooves plodding on the road and far-off pounding on wood where a neighbor was shingling a barn. And all these sounds related into a kind of music. His eyes were clear too. Fences and walls and sheds stood staunchly out in the yellow afternoon, and they were related too. There was change in everything. A flight of sparrows dropped into the dust and scrabbled for bits of food and then flew off like a gray scarf twisting in the light.⁸⁹

As in Huxley's experience, time seems to stand still, for the perceptions are more concerned with intensity of being and relation than with space and time:

Adam looked back at his brother. He had lost track of time and he did not know how long he had been standing in the doorway.

No time had passed. Charles was still struggling with the same large stone. And Adam had not released the full, held breath he had taken when time stopped.⁹⁰

Finally, Adam realizes that all things are one thing and one thing is

all things:

Suddenly he knew joy and sorrow felted into one fabric. Courage and fear were one thing too.⁹¹

There are a number of instances in Steinbeck's novels where an individual suddenly realizes his "cosmic identity." To A God Unknown ends with Josephy Wayne's assertion of his "cosmic identity." He is the last of his 'tribe' to stay with his land in the terrible drought. He finally realizes that he must sacrifice himself in order to bring the rain and save the land. He lies down on an altar shaped rock and cuts his wrists and as he dies his body becomes the land, mountains, and rain⁹²:

He worked his way carefully up its steep sides until at last he lay in the deep soft moss on the rock's top. When he had rested a few minutes, he took out his knife again and carefully, gently opened the vessels of his wrist. The pain was sharp at first, but in a moment its sharpness dulled. He watched the bright blood cascading over the moss, and he heard the shouting of the wind around the gove. The sky was growing grey. And time passed and Joseph grew grey too. He lay on his side with his wrist outstretched and looked down the long black mountain range of his body. Then his body grew huge and light. It arose into the sky, and out of it came the streaking rain. "I should have known," he whispered. "I am the rain." And yet he looked dully down the mountains of his body where the hills fell to an abyss. He felt the driving rain, and heard it whipping down, pattering on the ground. He saw his hills grow dark with moisture. Then a lancing pain shot through the heart of the world. "I am the land," he said, "and I am the rain. The grass will grow out of me in a little while."⁹³

Another character who recongizes his "cosmic identity" is Joe Saul in Burning Bright. When he discovers that he is sterile and that the child his wife is about to have is really Victor's (Mordeen, Joe's wife, knows that her husband wants a child more than anything and therefore makes love to Victor, even though she hates him, in order to become pregnant) he at first disowns his wife.

In the end, however, he is enlightened:

"I had to walk into the black to know--to know that every man is father to all children and every child must have all men as father. This is not a little piece of private property, registered and fenced and separated. Mordeen! This is the Child."94

Casey and Tom in The Grapes of Wrath and Doc Burton in In Dubious Battle are non-teleological prophets. In In Dubious Battle Steinbeck uses Burton as a yardstick or standard--we judge Mac and Jim and their enterprise by placing them alongside Burton. It is Burton who tells Mac that it is impossible to establish a system (communism) because "nothing stops If you were able to get an idea into effect tomorrow, it would start changing right away."95 When asked by Mac if he thinks the cause is good, Burton answers,

"We're going to pile up on that old rock again. That's why I don't like to talk very often. Listen to me, Mac. My senses aren't above reproach, but they're all I have. I want to see the whole picture--as nearly as I can. I don't want to put on the blinders of 'good' and 'bad' and limit my vision. If I used the term 'good' on a thing I'd lose my licence to inspect it, because there might be bad in it. Don't you see? I want to be able to look at the whole thing."96

But Burton is a double-edged standard, for in his attempts to see the whole thing he becomes detached from the individual particulars and becomes lonely. He is not the complete non-teleological prophet who is able to reconcile the particular with the whole by simply saying that the particular is the whole. Burton realizes the nature of the non-teleological universe, that "There aren't any beginnings Nor any ends"97 but in the face of this infinite unending flux he becomes lonely for, like Ahab in Moby-Dick, he fears the fate of the individual--will he simply be swallowed by the white faceless monster?

The tragedy which Steinbeck dramatizes in In Dubious Battle is that of the individual who realizes the importance of the whole but in the process forgets the significance of the particular. Mac and Jim have also fallen into this trap but they are not aware of it as Doc Burton is. Mac and Jim continually think of the end (and their end in this case is not even the whole--it is a limited system, communism) and are quite willing to use anything to bring about this end. Burton sees that this leads to a vicious circle for "the end is never really different from the means."⁹⁸ Violence simply results in violence. Jim and Mac fail to realize that each particular is so related to the whole that as soon as they begin to 'sacrifice' and exploit the particular they are inevitably crippling the whole--they simply perpetuate violence with violence. For Steinbeck, man's supreme moment is when he sacrifices himself and relates himself to the whole. Mac and Jim have perverted this sacrifice by forgetting their individual identity--Jim is as a result swallowed by the faceless identity (a perversion of man's cosmic identity) which he believes in. Mac and Jim do not fulfill their roles as true biologists (even though, ironically, this is what Jim sets out to do--to come alive again). They limit themselves with one view of reality and as a result cut themselves off from the infinite and eternal flux of Life. They are then only capable of a detached relation with life (not the non-teleological mutual relation with existence which is capable of great tenderness through instant acceptance) which "uses" and "experiences" reality (Buber's terms). Mac and Jim continually establish Martin Buber's "I-It" universe. Thus, in attempting to fulfill the communist dream of the whole, Mac and Jim pervert the non-teleological whole and become lost in the faceless

monster they themselves have created.

Steinbeck asserts again and again that the particular, the individual, must proliferate in all directions and in this way relate itself to the whole and become the whole. But paradoxically one does not cancel out the other. As Frederick Bracher points out, most of Steinbeck's novels imply that the real sin "against the Holy Ghost" is "to become so sunk in the social organism as to lose one's biological individuality."⁹⁹ On the other hand, it is just as much a sin to ignore one's social or group identity. In an essay in The Saturday Review Steinbeck writes,

I also believe that man is a double thing--a group animal and at the same time an individual. And it occurs to me that he cannot successfully be the second until he has fulfilled the first.¹⁰⁰

Thus, man, as a "double thing," must balance his individual identity with his "cosmic identity" in such a way that both are kept in tact.

In The Grapes of Wrath Casey Jones is the non-teleological prophet and Tom Joad, in the end, becomes his disciple. Like Jesus, Casey goes out into the wilderness and in contemplation discovers "that man is related to the whole thing."¹⁰¹ Casey undergoes a non-teleological conversion and discovers that "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do. It's all part of the same thing. And some of the things folks do is nice, and some ain't nice, but that's as far as any man got a right to say."¹⁰² The biological "balance of nature" discussed in Sea of Cortez becomes Casey's 'mystical' and Emersonian concept of the Oversoul:

"I figgered about the Holy Sperit and the Jesus road. I figgered, 'Why do we got to hang it on God or Jesus? Maybe,' I figgered, 'maybe it's all men an' all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Sperit--the human

sperit--the whole shebang. Maybe all men got one big soul ever-body's a part of.' Now I sat there thinkin', an' all of a suddent--I knew it. I knew it so deep down that it was true, and I still know it."103

Ceasey learns that everything that is, is related to the whole and that everything that is, is holy.¹⁰⁴ He no longer wants to be a preacher preaching about sin and virtue--he wants to live, to work, to proliferate in all directions:

"I ain't gonna baptize. I'm gonna work in the fiel's, in the green fiel's, an' I'm gonna be near to folks. I'm gonna try to teach 'em nothin'. I'm gonna try to learn. Gonna learn why the folks walks in the grass, gonna hear 'em talk, gonna hear 'em sing. Gonna listen to kids eatin' mush. Gonna hear husban' an' wife a-poundin' the mattress in the night. Gonna eat with 'em an' learn Gonna lay in the grass, open an' honest with anybody that'll have me. Gonna cuss an' swear an' hear the poetry of folks talkin'. All that's holy, all that's what I didn' understan'. All them things is the good things."105

Casey has become the prophet, the "talker"¹⁰⁶ who asks questions instead of the preacher who limits reality with the sin-virtue teleology.

Ma is another mouthpiece of Steinbeck's philosophy. As she sits in the tent at Needles, she fans Granma (who is dying) and tries to explain to Rose of Sharon that death and birth are really a part of the whole flux of life and that when a person realizes this, his hurt or his death is not a lonely thing:

"They's a time of change, an' when that comes, dyin' is a piece of all dyin', and bearin' is a piece of all bearin', an' bearin' an' dyin' is two pieces of the same thing. An' then things ain't lonely any more. An' then a hurt don't hurt so bad, 'cause it ain't a lonely hurt no more, Rosa-sharn."107

In effect, through relation with the whole, the individual is never alone for he becomes the whole.

The non-teleological emphasis on relation is very important in all of Steinbeck's novels but is especially important in The Grapes of Wrath and In Dubious Battle. Relation is important thematically, and, as we have seen, structurally. Steinbeck implies that man must "live into" his existence, must proliferate in all directions and relate himself to the whole. This relation takes place on all possible levels --relation between a man and his material extentions, between a man and a woman, between a man and all men, between man and his universe. If a man does not "live into" being and relate himself to the whole, he is dead (this is Mac's and Jim's fate). Casey went into the wilderness and discovered that he was related to the universe, animate and inanimate: "There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. We was one thing. An' that one thing was holy."¹⁰⁸ In an inter-chapter in East of Eden Steinbeck describes the "glory," the satori or non-teleological experience in which the individual suddenly feels his one-ness with the whole of reality and yet at the same time is not swallowed or annihilated by this immense reality:

Sometimes a kind of glory lights up the mind of a man. It happens to nearly everyone. You can feel it growing or preparing like a fuse burning toward dynamite. It is a feeling in the stomach, a delight of the nerves, of the forearms. The skin tastes the air, and every deep-drawn breath is sweet. Its beginning has the pleasure of a great stretching yawn; it flashes in the brain and the whole world glows outside your eyes. A man may have lived all of his life in the gray, and the land and the trees of him dark and somber. The events, even the important ones, may have trooped by faceless and pale. And then--the glory--so that a cricket song sweetens his ears, the smell of the earth rises chanting to his nose, and dappling light under a tree blesses his eyes. Then a man pours outward, a torrent of him, and yet he is not diminished. And I guess a man's importance in the world can be measured by the quality and number of his glories. It is a lonely thing but it relates us to the world. It is the mother of all creativeness, and it sets each man separate from all other men.¹⁰⁹

This "glory" in which the outside universe of particulars seems to flow into the perceptions and the perceptions pour outward is what Buber means by the "primary word" "I-Thou." Buber says, "All real living is meeting,"¹¹⁰ and this meeting is mutual relation. Between man and what he experiences there must be a mutual relation:

Between you and it there is mutual giving: you say Thou to it and give yourself to it, it says Thou to you and gives itself to you.¹¹¹

But when there is no relation between a man and what exists, the primary word "I-It" is spoken:

But whenever the sentence "I see the tree" is so uttered that it no longer tells of a relation between the man--I--and the tree--Thou-- , but establishes the perception of the tree as object by the human consciousness, the barrier between subject and object has been set up. The primary word I-It, the word of separation, has been spoken.¹¹²

The separating of the I from the Thou, the perceiver from the perceived, kills "the lived relation."¹¹³ It is Urizen and the "dry-ball" biologist who are imprisoned in the dead world of "It"--they are unable to stand "over against" what exists "in the flow of mutual action":

But now the separated I emerges, transformed. Shrunk from substance and fulness to a functional point, to a subject which experiences and uses, I approaches and takes possession of all It existing "in and for itself," and forms in conjunction with it the other primary word. The man who has become conscious of I, that is, the man who says I-It, stands before things, but not over against them in the flow of mutual action. Now with the magnifying glass of peering observation he bends over particulars and objectifies them, or with the field-glass of remote inspection he objectifies them and arranges them as scenery, he isolates them in observation without any feeling of their exclusiveness, or he knits them into a scheme of observation without any feeling of universality. The feeling of exclusiveness he would be able to find only in relation, the feeling of universality only through it.¹¹⁴

In Sea of Cortez Steinbeck speaks of a man's relation to his

external extentions--his land, his home, his money. He says that these "external complexities" are a part of him:

But having projected himself into these external complexities, he is them. His house, his automobile are a part of him and a large part of him. This is beautifully demonstrated by a thing doctors know--that when a man loses his possessions a very common result is sexual impotence.¹¹⁵

But they are only a part of him as long as he establishes a relationship.

In The Grapes of Wrath men who have established a relation with the land, with their homes and the things they own, are "tractored off" by men who turn their worlds into "It." The man who drives the tractor has no relation with the land, he "uses" it. As Buber points out, the "machine man" or "It" man "experiences things as sums of qualities." In one of the inter-chapters Steinbeck contrasts the "I-Thou" relation established between the farmer and his land and the "I-It" non-relation between the machine man and the land:

The houses were left vacant on the land, and the land was vacant because of this. Only the tractor sheds of corrugated iron, silver and gleaming, were alive; and they were alive with metal and gasoline and oil, the disks of the plows shining. The tractors had lights shining, for there is no day and night for a tractor and the disks turn the earth in the darkness and they glitter in the daylight. And when a horse stops work and goes into the barn there is a life and vitality left, there is a breathing and a warmth, and the feet shift on the straw, and the jaws champ on the hay, and the ears and the eyes are alive. There is a warmth of life in the barn, and the heat and smell of life. But when the motor of a tractor stops, it is dead as the ore it came from. The heat goes out of it like the living heat that leaves a corpse. Then the corrugated iron doors are closed and the tractor man drives home to town, perhaps twenty miles away, and he need not come back for weeks or months, for the tractor is dead. And this is easy and efficient. So easy that the wonder goes out of the work, so efficient that the wonder goes out of the land and the working of it, and with the wonder the deep understanding and the relation. And in the tractor man there grows the contempt that comes only to a stranger who has little understanding and no relation. For nitrates are not the land, nor phosphates; and the length of fiber in the cotton is not the land. Carbon is not a man, nor salt nor water nor calcium. He is all these, but he is much more,

much more; and the land is so much more than its analysis. The man who is more than his chemistry, walking on the earth, turning his plow point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land that is more than its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors are shut, he goes home, and his home is not the land.¹¹⁶

The land is being killed, spiritually and physically murdered by the banks and finance companies and their hired machine men. All of the land is planted to cotton because cotton will make money even in drought--but cotton is the worst crop possible for land in drought.

The land is raped by the tractor men:

Behind the harrows, the long seeders--twelve curved iron penes erected in the foundry, orgasms set by gears, raping methodically, raping without passion And when that crop grew, and was harvested, no man had crumbled a hot clod in his fingers and let the earth sift past his fingertips. No man had touched the seed, or lusted for the growth. Men ate what they had not raised, had no connection with the bread. The land bore under iron, and under iron gradually died; for it was not loved or hated, it had no prayers or curses.¹¹⁷

When the Joad family begins their journey, Grampa suddenly decides that he is not going and they have to drug him in order to force him to come. Grampa dies of a stroke within the first two days of the journey. Casey says that "Grampa an' the old place, they was jus' the same thing,"¹¹⁸ and, "Grampa didn' die tonight. He died the minute you took 'im off the place Oh, he was breathin' . . . but he was dead. He was that place, an' he knowed it."¹¹⁹

It should be pointed out here that Steinbeck is not anti-machine. The horrible picture he creates of the tractor men and the land is a result of non-relation between man and machine and man and land. This is not the fault of the machine--it is the fault of the

man. Both Al and Tom are capable of the "I-Thou" relation with machines.

Al becomes a part of the truck and the truck becomes a part of him:

Al was one with his engine, every nerve listening for weaknesses, for thumps or squeals, hums and chattering that indicate a change that may cause a breakdown. He had become the soul of the car.¹²⁰

When Tom is fixing the broken bearing in the Wilson's car, he literally becomes a part of the machine:

He strained and the wrench slipped. A long gash appeared on the back of his hand. Tom looked at it--the blood flowed evenly from the wound and met the oil and dripped into the pan.¹²¹

He tells Casey, "I never fixed no car in my life 'thout cuttin' myself."¹²²

Thus, Tom has a very organic relationship with the machines he works with. It is only the small men who are incapable of establishing a relation with what exists that turn the machine into a monster.

Casey and Tom are the non-teleological prophets who can say the primary word "I-Thou." Mac and Jim are teleological "It" men who are tragically misled by a false vision. Mac and Jim are incapable of establishing a relation with what exists for they use what exists for an abstract and therefore limited end. Casey and Tom are working for change and revolution in a much broader sense than Mac and Jim. Casey and Tom are not trying to destroy capitalism simply to replace it with another static order such as communism--they are striving to nourish life, to make the first rule of life, living, a possibility for all men. Tom's and Casey's 'doctrine' is inexpressable--Casey is always saying that he cannot quite say what it is he has thought out. Their concept is the non-teleological vision which admits of infinite change. The closest Steinbeck ever really comes to verbalizing this

'philosophy' is when he says it pre-supposes "living into." As Buber says of the "Thou," its "purely intensive dimension is definable only in terms of itself."¹²³

This brings us to Steinbeck's implicit communication of non-teleological thinking. In his novels Steinbeck constantly attempts to create a microcosm which will expand out and "define the outlines of the macrocosm."¹²⁴ He wants his novels to have an open-ended structure. But at the same time the structure must be unified, it must have some kind of pattern which will reflect the unity of the non-teleological universe. His main tool in creating this structure is the prophetic image, the rhythm. The rhythm, says Forster, is used in a novel which has no external shape. Rhythms knit the novel together internally and do not give the novel a closed or "tight" form such as the hour-glass pattern of James' The Ambassadors.¹²⁵ Forster believes that a rigid pattern cannot be "combined with the immense richness of material which life provides."¹²⁶ Forster uses the analogy of music to express what he means by internal cohesion and external formlessness in the novel:

Music, though it does not employ human beings, though it is governed by intricate laws, nevertheless does offer in its final expression a type of beauty which fiction might achieve in its own way. Expansion. That is the idea the novelist must cling to. Not completion. Not rounding off but opening out. When the symphony is over we feel that the notes and tunes composing it have been liberated, they have found in the rhythm of the whole their individual freedom. Cannot the novel be like that?¹²⁷

Through the prophetic image Steinbeck does create a structure which is internally unified and externally "loose" or open. He is also quite conscious of music as an analogy to his work. H.T. Moore tells of Steinbeck's interest in music and of his use of the rhythm in In

Dubious Battle:

Musical methods have continued to interest him, not only from the aspect of general structure but also as sound values; a friend of Steinbeck's has stated that In Dubious Battle "was carefully built acoustically, so to speak, and he pointed out to me that every scene had the sounds of another scene intruding into it to give it depth and a tri-dimensional quality." This is certainly not obvious, except in the case of repeated phrases such as "This valley's organized like Italy," and "He didn't want nothing for himself"--it is far less obtrusive than many other technical devices Steinbeck has worked out from time to time.¹²⁸

It is the prophetic image which creates this "tri-dimensional quality," which makes the work of art reach back and open out.

Another method Steinbeck uses to give his novels an open-ended structure is by beginning in medias res and ending in medias res. The endings of In Dubious Battle, The Grapes of Wrath and East of Eden are deliberately cut off at a 'high point' in order to give the impression of continuation--nothing stops, nothing is established, the flux of life goes on. In Dubious Battle ends in the middle of a sentence; The Grapes of Wrath ends without resolving the fate of Ma, Pa, Rose of Sharon, Winfield and Ruthie; and East of Eden ends ambiguously--will Caleb "choose his course and fight it through and win"?¹²⁹ Thus, the novels themselves never become "closed systems" and they implicitly reflect the non-teleological philosophy.

Although the external form of the novels is open-ended, they are very carefully woven together internally through the prophetic images. But at the same time that the prophetic images unify the novel, through relation they carry infinite implications and can go beyond the fabric of the novel and communicate what has not been explicitly said. The ultimate effect of the prophetic images is to give the novel the mysterious unity of the non-teleological universe.

As. E.K. Brown says, "To express what is both an order and a mystery rhythmic process, repetitions with intricate variations, are the most appropriate of idioms."¹³⁰ Steinbeck manipulates his form in such a way that it practices what it preaches--prophecy or non-teleology. It is the silent and subtle relationships between the particulars of Steinbeck's microcosmic worlds which suggest to the reader the "glory," the "Thou." Buber says that only silence leaves the "Thou" free--any attempt to articulate it, to capture it, immediately renders it "It":

Only silence before the Thou--silence of all tongues, silent patience in the undivided word that precedes the formed and vocal response--leaves the Thou free, and permits man to take his stand with it in the reserve where the spirit is not manifest, but is.¹³¹

Steinbeck employs prophecy, a silent-speaking form, to communicate his philosophy and not limit it. He speaks through silent relations, through a form which does not destroy what it captures because it is left free.

He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sun rise.¹³²

CONCLUSION

The most significant characteristic of the prophetic form and its prophetic message is its immediacy or "presentness." Each of man's responses to reality "binds up the Thou into the world of It."¹ Art too is a response and results in the murdering of the "Thou": "form is disclosed to the artist as he looks at what is over against him. He banishes it to be 'structure.'"² Just as Agee in Let us Now Praise Famous Men was attempting to give his audience the "cruel radiance of what is" by using a form which did not "digest" (and therefore distort) reality into art, Steinbeck through the prophetic image and the open-ended structure attempts and succeeds in creating an art form which does not totally murder the "Thou." Like the reality around us, the prophetic novel

had had the nature and disposition put into it to change back again and again. This was the meaning in that hour of the spirit when spirit was joined to man and bred the response in him--again and again that which has the status of object must blaze up into presentness and enter the elemental state from which it came, to be looked on and lived in the present by men.³

In other words, Steinbeck manages to create a form which elicits from the reader the "I-Thou" response. This is the result of the prophetic image and the open-ended structure which enunciate the whole of a prophecy while knowing a part of the prophecy.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

- ¹Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 126.
- ²Ibid., 132.
- ³Ibid., 127.
- ⁴Ibid.
- ⁵Ibid., 117.
- ⁶Ibid., 127.
- ⁷Ibid.
- ⁸Ibid., 135.
- ⁹Ibid., 128.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 126.
- ¹¹Ibid., 154.
- ¹²Ibid., 153-154.
- ¹³Ibid., 151.

Chapter I

- ¹Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 33.
- ²Steinbeck, Once There Was a War, 51-52.
- ³Ibid.
- ⁴Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 142.
- ⁵E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 65.
- ⁶Peter Lisca, "John Steinbeck: A Literary Biography", Steinbeck and his Critics, 10.
- ⁷Yeats, Selected Poetry, 95.
- ⁸Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 19.
- ⁹Ibid., 19-20.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., 13.

¹³Ibid., 12.

¹⁴Ibid., 5.

¹⁵Ibid., 12.

¹⁶Ibid., 13.

¹⁷Ibid., 274.

¹⁸Ibid., 6.

¹⁹Ibid., 34.

²⁰Ibid., 20.

²¹Ibid., 6.

²²Ibid., 7.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 34.

²⁶Ibid., 84.

²⁷Ibid., 297-298.

²⁸Ibid., 247.

²⁹Ibid., 248.

³⁰Ibid., 249.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 291

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Howard Levant, "The Unity of In Dubious Battle: Violence and Dehumanization", 28.

³⁶Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 284.

³⁷Ibid., 198.

³⁸Ibid., 183.

³⁹Ibid., 188.

⁴⁰Ibid., 189.

⁴¹Ibid., 131.

⁴²Ibid., 288.

⁴³Ibid., 287.

⁴⁴Ibid., 10.

⁴⁵Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶Ibid., 261.

⁴⁷Ibid., 32.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 249.

⁵⁰Ibid., 253.

⁵¹Ibid., 254.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 312.

⁵⁴Ibid., 221.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 227, 233, 234.

⁵⁷Ibid., 258.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Peter Lisca, "John Steinbeck: A Literary Biography", Steinbeck and his Critics, 10.

⁶⁰Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 116.

⁶¹Ibid., 15.

⁶²Ibid., 299.

⁶³Ibid., 258.

⁶⁴Ibid., 155.

⁶⁵Ibid., 258.

⁶⁶For a very thorough study of the parallels between In Dubious Battle and Paradise Lost see Fontenrose's John Steinbeck, 42-53.

⁶⁷Ibid., 55.

⁶⁸Ibid., 97.

⁶⁹Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 28-29.

⁷⁰Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 176.

⁷¹Ibid., 71.

⁷²Ibid., 64.

⁷³Ibid., 62.

⁷⁴Ibid., 87.

⁷⁵Ibid., 60.

⁷⁶Ibid., 87.

⁷⁷Ibid., 284. Note also the face imagery in this passage. Dan's "sunken face" is contrasted to the baby's "round face."

⁷⁸Ibid., 98.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 301.

⁸¹Ibid., 33.

⁸²Ibid., 297-298.

⁸³Milton, Paradise Lost, 180-181.

⁸⁴Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 297.

⁸⁵Ibid., 298.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid., 185.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., 182.

- ⁹⁰Milton, Paradise Lost, 186.
- ⁹¹Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 297.
- ⁹²*Ibid.*
- ⁹³*Ibid.*, 98.
- ⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 132.
- ⁹⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 53
- ⁹⁷Milton, Paradise Lost, 181.
- ⁹⁸Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 301.
- ⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 298.
- ¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 129.
- ¹⁰¹Yeats, Selected Poetry, 95.
- ¹⁰²*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰³Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 63.
- ¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 228.
- ¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 281.
- ¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 169.
- ¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 21.
- ¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 22.
- ¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 167.
- ¹¹¹*Ibid.*
- ¹¹²*Ibid.*, 81.
- ¹¹³*Ibid.*, 282.
- ¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 148.
- ¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 58.
- ¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 273.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 257.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 285.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 189.

¹²⁰Ibid., 202.

¹²¹Ibid., 12.

¹²²Ibid., 221.

¹²³Ibid., 139.

¹²⁴Ibid., 217.

¹²⁵Ibid., 305.

¹²⁶Ibid., 40.

¹²⁷Ibid., 182.

¹²⁸Ibid., 153.

¹²⁹Ibid., 147.

¹³⁰Ibid., 214.

¹³¹Ibid., 147-148.

¹³²Ibid., 298.

¹³³Ibid., 312.

¹³⁴Ibid., 214.

¹³⁵Ibid., 312.

¹³⁶Ibid., 206.

¹³⁷Ibid., 312-313.

¹³⁸Ibid., 265.

Chapter II

¹Fiedler, Waiting For the End, 60-61.

²Fiedler, An End to Innocence, 192.

³Fiedler, No! in Thunder, 12.

⁴Burgam, "The Sensibility of John Steinbeck", Steinbeck and his Critics, 112.

⁵Fiedler, No! in Thunder, 12.

⁶Ibid.

⁷See Shockley's article "Christian Symbolism in The Grapes of Wrath" (270) and Carlson's article "Symbolism in The Grapes of Wrath" (174) for examinations of the symbolic, thematic, and structural significance of the last scene.

⁸Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, 68.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 69.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 28-29.

¹³Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 76.

¹⁶Ibid., 364.

¹⁷Ibid., 24.

¹⁸Ibid., 60.

¹⁹Ibid., 20, 22.

²⁰Ibid., 20.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 521.

²³Ibid., 22.

²⁴Ibid., 364.

²⁵Ibid., 619.

²⁶Ibid., 22.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 274.

²⁹Ibid., 275.

³⁰Ibid., 286.

³¹Peter Lisca (The Wide World of John Steinbeck, 159) also notes that this incident of Ma crushing the red ant is an echo of the turtle crushing the red ant in Chapter Three.

³²Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 60.

³³Ibid., 512.

³⁴Ibid., 514.

³⁵Ibid., 9.

³⁶Ibid., 103.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 123.

⁴¹Ibid., 236.

⁴²Ibid., 237

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 384.

⁴⁵Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, 69.

⁴⁶Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 34.

⁴⁷Ibid., 60.

⁴⁸Ibid., 500.

⁴⁹Ibid., 123.

⁵⁰Ibid., 236.

⁵¹Ibid., 237.

⁵²Ibid., 383.

⁵³Ibid., 525.

⁵⁴Ibid., 22.

⁵⁵Ibid., 205.

⁵⁶Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, 69.

⁵⁷Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 241.

⁵⁸Ibid., 342.

⁵⁹Ibid., 255.

⁶⁰Ibid., 256.

⁶¹Ibid., 257.

⁶²Ibid., 259.

⁶³Ibid., 260-261.

⁶⁴Ibid., 264.

⁶⁵Ibid., 340.

⁶⁶Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, 70.

⁶⁷Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 236.

⁶⁸Ibid., 501.

⁶⁹Note also the similarity between Hooligan and the turtle in that both go over a "wall" as well as being caught in a sack.

⁷⁰Ibid., 502.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., 503.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 505.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., 570-571.

⁷⁷cf. the Hutterites of Alberta.

⁷⁸Ibid., 20.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰The turtle itself does look like the Yin and Yang--its shell is a circular shape and it is dark on one side and light on the other; "The back was brown-gray, like the dust, but the underside of the shell was creamy yellow, clean and smooth." (The Grapes of Wrath, 24).

⁸¹Carr, Handbook of Turtles, 32.

⁸²Pope, Turtles of the United States & Canada, 15.

⁸³Ibid., 331-332.

⁸⁴Ibid., 4.

Chapter III

¹Carpenter, "The Philosophical Joads", Steinbeck and His Critics, 249.

²Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 132.

³Ibid., 1-2.

⁴Gannett, "John Steinbeck's Way of Writing", Steinbeck and His Critics, 35.

⁵Lisca, "John Steinbeck: A Literary Biography", Steinbeck and His Critics, 14.

⁶Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 217.

⁷Ibid., 142.

⁸Ibid., 216-217.

⁹Ibid., 257.

¹⁰Ibid., 151.

¹¹Ibid., 120.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 121.

¹⁴Blake, Jerusalem, 447-448.

¹⁵Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 3-4.

¹⁶Ibid., 257.

¹⁷Blake, The Book of Thel, 164.

¹⁸Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 263.

¹⁹Ibid., 150-151.

²⁰Ibid., 144.

- ²¹Ibid.
- ²²Ibid., 217.
- ²³Blake, The First Book of Urizen, 233.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Blake, For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise, 568.
- ²⁶Ibid., 574.
- ²⁷Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 29.
- ²⁸Ibid., 85.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Ibid., 73
- ³¹Ibid., 29.
- ³²Blake, Jerusalem, 442.
- ³³Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 2.
- ³⁴Ibid., 2-4.
- ³⁵Ibid., 143.
- ³⁶Blake, "Auguries of Innocence", 118.
- ³⁷Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 187.
- ³⁸Thoreau, Walden, 249.
- ³⁹Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 85.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 217.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 137.
- ⁴²Ibid., 146.
- ⁴³Ibid., 147.
- ^{43a}Ibid., 148.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., 147.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., 29.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., 149.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 149-150.

⁴⁹Blake, "Mock on, Mock on", 107.

⁵⁰Huxley, "The Doors of Perception", 329.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 330.

⁵⁴Agee, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, 11.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., 13.

⁵⁸Ibid., 463-464.

⁵⁹Ibid., 466.

⁶⁰Ibid., 468.

⁶¹Ibid., 459.

⁶²Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 193.

⁶³Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 165.

⁶⁴Ibid., 265.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Lisca, The Wide World of John Steinbeck, 145.

⁶⁷Ibid., 146.

⁶⁸Steinbeck, Once There Was a War, 135.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Fontenrose quotes Hicks' criticism (John Steinbeck, 137) but does not give the source.

⁷³Fontenrose, John Steinbeck, 137.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Steinbeck, The Winter of Our Discontent, 75.

⁷⁷Ibid., 142.

⁷⁸Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 165.

⁷⁹Conrad, Lord Jim, 352.

⁸⁰Steinbeck, The Winter of Our Discontent, 92.

⁸¹Ibid., 93.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Fontenrose, John Steinbeck, 137.

⁸⁵Steinbeck, The Winter of Our Discontent, 135-136.

⁸⁶Ibid., 217.

⁸⁷Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 151.

⁸⁸Steinbeck, East of Eden, 478.

⁸⁹Ibid., 105.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²cf. Sea of Cortez (75): "Sometimes we asked of the Indians the local names of animals we had taken, and then they consulted together. They seemed to live on remembered things, to be so related to the seashore and the rocky hills and the loneliness that they are these things. To ask about the country is like asking about themselves. "How many toes have you?" "What, toes? Let's see--of course, ten. I have known them all my life, I never thought to count them. Of course it will rain tonight, I don't know why. Something in me tells me I will rain tonight. Of course, I am the whole thing, now that I think about it. I ought to know when I will rain."

⁹³Steinbeck, To A God Unknown, 179.

⁹⁴Steinbeck, Burning Bright, 130.

⁹⁵Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle, 129.

⁹⁶Ibid., 129-130.

⁹⁷Ibid., 230.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Bracher, "Steinbeck and the Biological View of Man", Steinbeck and His Critics, 191.

¹⁰⁰Steinbeck, "Some Thoughts on Juvenile Delinquency", 22.

¹⁰¹Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 217.

¹⁰²Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 32.

¹⁰³Ibid., 32-33.

¹⁰⁴Casey in fact paraphrases "For every thing that lives is Holy" from Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: "Heard a fella tell a poem one time, an' he says 'All that lives is holy.'" (The Grapes of Wrath, 196).

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 127-128.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 286.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁹Steinbeck, East of Eden, 113.

¹¹⁰Buber, I and Thou, 11.

¹¹¹Ibid., 33.

¹¹²Ibid., 23.

¹¹³Ibid., 18.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 29-30.

¹¹⁵Steinbeck, Sea of Cortez, 87.

¹¹⁶Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 157-158.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 49.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 199.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid., 167.

¹²¹Ibid., 234.

¹²²Ibid., 234-235.

¹²³Buber, I and Thou, 30.

¹²⁴Steinbeck, letter to Occident, reprinted in Lisca's The Wide World of John Steinbeck, 146.

¹²⁵Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 140-148.

¹²⁶Ibid., 149-150.

¹²⁷Ibid., 155.

¹²⁸Moore, The Novels of John Steinbeck: A First Critical Study, 46.

¹²⁹Steinbeck, East of Eden, 269.

¹³⁰Brown, Rhythm in the Novel, 115.

¹³¹Buber, I and Thou, 39.

¹³²Blake, "Eternity", 99.

Conclusion

¹Buber, I and Thou, 39-40.

²Ibid., 41.

³Ibid., 40.

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